'Dear Abby' Of The School Set

Several letters this week gave this problem from a Portland mother:

"Dear Mr. Gauld: (Joe is fine with me)

> "I'm sure your column will be read as avidly as 'Dear Abby's'! We parents continuously need help from one another, and after reading your first installment, I feel I'm going to receive it.
>
> "Here is our problem concerning our son who is going on 13. He does average school work, is enthusiastic about extra-curricular activities, gets along well socially - what really drives his dad and I up a wall is his irresponsibility regarding 'doing a job well done.' He seems to always be in a hurry whether it's household duties, such as feeding his dog and strewing dog chunks around, cleaning his room up and stashing his belongings in unimaginable places just to get them out of sight, or fixing his bike and leaving the tools scattered about the driveway. His school grades suffer, I know, because of this trait - down right carelessness in simply spelling and handwriting.
>
> "This isn't just a phase. He's been like this all of his life. We thought he was going to grow out of these bad habits!
>
> "What do you suggest? Basically, he's a great kid, but we're tired of harping at him for this."

It's poetic justice that your letter is my first, for "I have met the enemy and he is me". Your son sounds just like me at thirteen.

My stepfather fought a losing battle trying to teach me responsibility. I still see him marching, with hands clasped behind his back, inspecting my clean-up of papers on the lawn while I followed meekly behind. How I dreaded each movement of his arm to point out my glaring misses and the inevitable stern warning: "Joey, don't call me out again until you are ready to pass inspection".

He even kept me in one weekend trying to get me to stop leaving the soap in the basin. But Mother tried to balance his excesses and often undermined his efforts. As a partner in crime, she once played the piano so I could roll the car out of the driveway to go on an important date.

They both tried to enroll me in a military school to shape me up. In spite of my fear of my stepfather, I still won out. All kids know the jugular vein of a parent's guilt and I hit his: "you're just trying to get me out of the house."

They finally shook me the time they wrote the Dean at College asking if they should stop supporting my wasted education - without even telling me! The Dean wrongly saved me, but it was a chilly dawn: my parents wouldn't always be there "to pick up behind me."

Now my stepfather must be up there enjoying my trials with my own kids. It is a rare occasion when my 10 year old Gigi comes out of her own little world to pay us a visit. I ask for a coke and she can forget it before she reaches the kitchen.

What I am trying to say is this: You obviously have an open and concerned home, giving a fine boy a full opportunity to find himself. But he is too secure and has learned to trust that someone will always bail him out. How would he feel if you went to parties and forgot to come home and cook his dinner? Even though I know you won't do anything that drastic, at least draw a line at selfishness. The one time I slapped my son was the third time his thoughtlessness made others suffer after words obviously didn't work. I missed partially with a right, but then caught him flush with a left. I riveted our eyes a foot away and calmly said, "Malcolm, I want you to know the way I really feel about that." Not only was the air cleared, but he never let his kind of irresponsibility become so insensitive again.

Realize your son's school is encouraging his bad habits. He is taught to concentrate on the important things Mr. So and So writes on the blackboard. Then he goes to another class, leaving a messy room to someone called a janitor. Isn't it normal for him to concentrate on "fixing his bike" and then "leaving the tools scattered" for someone else?

I am blessed with a teacher who has somehow learned to also respect the places where we learn to eat or sleep. Enough to take a job on my maintenance staff so that next year he can teach his respect to our kids. So I asked Steve to share what seems a wondrous gift with both you and me.

When Steve was 4, his family left a City apartment to live on a broken down farm whose previous owner had stacked his refuse on all 4 sides of the house. It was so bad, they all have had to work to put their home in shape ever since. This sharing led to a pride that made the farm belong to all of them.

"The apple doesn't fall very far from the tree"; so you, your husband and I can probably ask ourselves the same questions. Do you still share the family dinner table or do you eat in front of the TV? Look around your house. Are the furnishings shared or are they a display for visitors? How many repairs or home improvements has your husband shared with your son?

If you and your husband are hurting as badly as I am over these questions, then I think you may have an answer.

Giving Confidence To A Ghetto Kid

Mr. G: "How does a parent help a teenager who has a poor self-image?"

Let me tell you about Cal, a little black who was simply drained of confidence. Cal walked with a slump, with his eyes looking down. He talked with a mumble, always looking away, I never saw him smile.

Cal came from the Ghetto. Not many people understand how the Ghetto can hold a kid down. The American dream tells a kid he can be anything he sets his mind to. But, first, he must really believe in it. In the Ghetto, there are too many losers and too much despair for a kid to believe that dreams can come true.

Cal's other problem was his Dad. Mr. C. was so determined that Cal was going to break out of the Ghetto, that he physically tried to knock every shortcoming out of Cal. In the process, of course, he knocked out Cal's spirit too.

Yet, I still admired Cal's Dad. Many Ghetto homes are fatherless because pressures on the father are intense. His own opportunities are so limited he often feels like a failure. But Ghettos are where I find my strongest families. It takes real guts and concern to face failure and eke out a living that will provide your kids with a better opportunity than you had. Cal's Dad kept his son in my school with money he couldn't afford.

Cal was in trouble at my school right from the start. To top it off, he was caught stealing. Most of what Cal stole was of no use to him. It was as if he believed some object would magically give him confidence in himself.

After Cal was disciplined, he was brought into my office. "Why, Cal?" His eyes continually looked at the floor. "Well, Tommy, he say...and I try....but if I doan..." Cal was a master at making himself so hard to understand that most people gave up trying. I jumped to the couch and positioned my face a foot away from his petrified eyes, holding the bottom of his chin.

"The first rule of this talk is you don't let your chin fall lower than this." I'm sure I looked like Ghengis Khan in his worst moments to Cal. It was an amusing picture; Cal continued to mumble away, but with his jaw stuck out as if he were going to punch somebody.

"Stop mumbling," I said sharply. "Say anything, but say it tough." Scared to death, Cal tried, but it just didn't come off. "Go practice in the bathroom mirror, but you better learn to make me feel like I'm getting bawled out." When he came back, I think he surprised himself by barking at me.

"Cal, that's not too bad." He looked at me blankly. "When somebody compliments you, Cal, you're supposed to smile." Cal moved his mouth in a position that made it look as if he had eaten something that didn't agree with him. "Cal, you go practice that smile in the mirror and you continue to practice it every night and every morning. And when I see you, you better show me a real smile."

Cal's attitude changed and he was accepted as a member of the community again. But then he found some new ways to get into trouble and again was brought into my office.

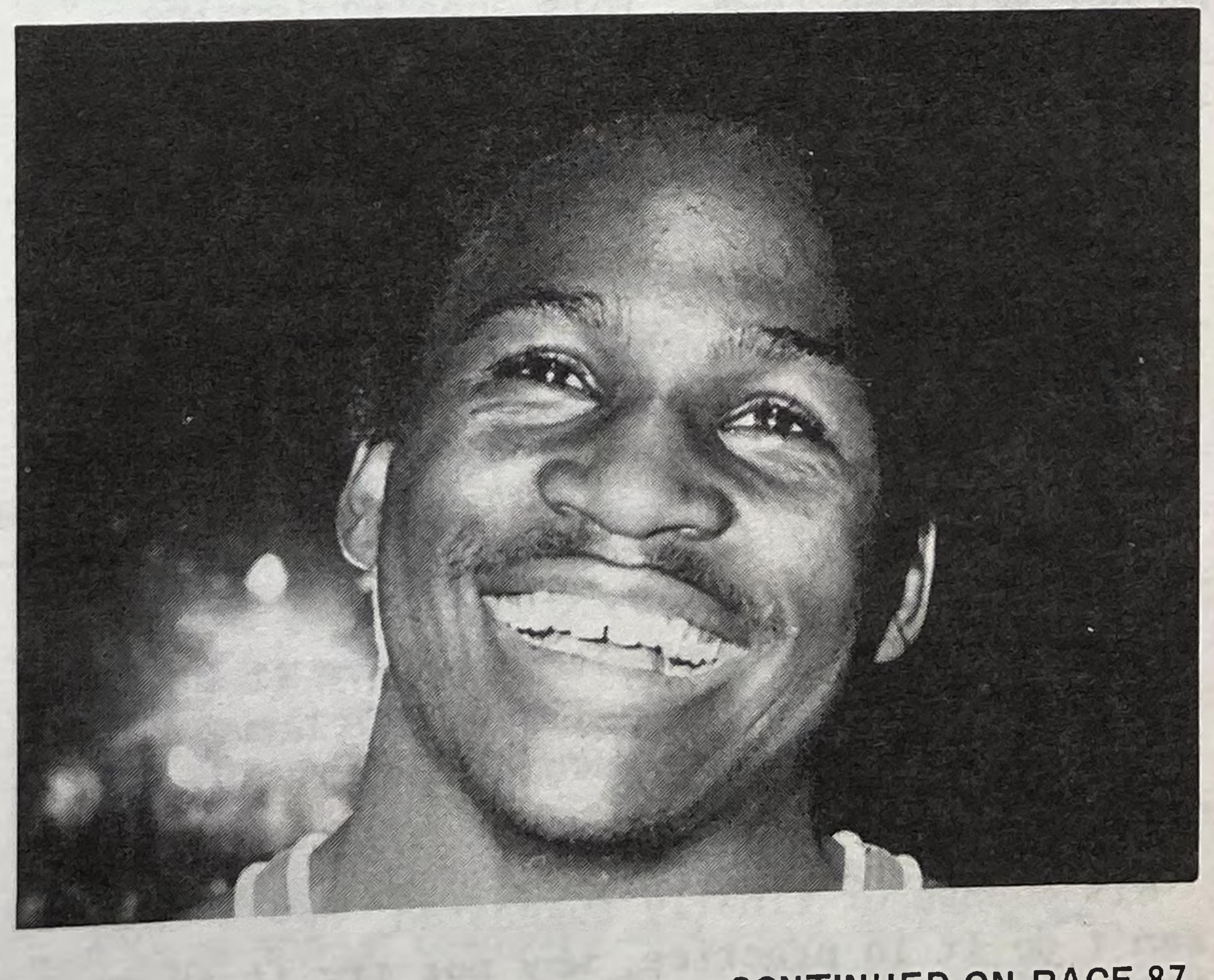
"Cal, what do you really want out of life?" The question baffled Cal. After a long pause, he answered, "To stay out of trouble."

"Well, doesn't trying to stay out of trouble get you into trouble?" The discussion drastically pointed up Cal's outlook on life. He had seen nothing in himself except the ability to get into trouble.

"Cal, by tomorrow you are to do 6 things you have never done before and don't come into my office without having them done." I gave him one of my most terrible looks. He got the message, for he came in the next day with a written list: he helped another boy set his table, he studied half an hour at an odd time, and so on. The following day he found 8 things on his own. After a week, Cal had a lift in his voice as he described his deeds.

Cal's parents came to the school to take their turn on the hot seat. It was a hard lesson for both of them, but typical of parents strongly committed to see their child grow up well, they learned it well. "I know you both fear for Cal's future if he doesn't straighten out, but you must believe Cal's best will take care of his worst."

Not surprisingly, the following week I caught Cal whistling in the hall. And I must say he was almost a wise guy when he retorted to my kidding. Oh well, at least I could enjoy his growth until his "next stop" would get us all in the soup again.



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Textbooks Can't Teach Youngsters About Life

> "Mr. G.:...I know many students who get out of college armed with a Degree and filled with academic information, who have very little knowledge of the real world outside or how to get along with people. Why not a column on how you turn the usual educational program around?"

This grandfather has put his finger on why schools are failing to prepare kids for life. In a nutshell, they work to develop a kid's mind, expecting his overall growth to follow. But real growth occurs only when you are fully engaged with a kid's mind, heart, body and soul.

Take the time I watched Charlie try to jump off a 20 foot pier at Hurricane Island. My son and I had joined the team of boys to face this leap after an early morning 2 mile run. A 20 foot jump is bad enough, but into a frigid Atlantic Ocean at 6 a.m. in early June is cause to pause.

Charlie faced his turn with determination. He was one of those perky little blacks whose spirit made him the natural leader of his group. To inspire his team to conquer their fear of this obstacle, he even got a running start. But when he reached the point of take-off, his feet, as if acting by treachery, failed to leave the dock!

His face first showed disbelief and disgust, but like Casey at the Bat, he smiled back at his supporters to reassure them and then planted his feet with a grim finality to leap with abandon into the sea. But again, his feet seemed to stubbornly say, "ain't no way, Charlie."

"You can do it, Charlie" came the chorus from teammates. But ten minutes later, Charlie was huddled off to the side in defeat, eyes downward, now a small boy listening to soft words from a counselor. Perhaps learning that body and soul don't always follow the mind and heart.

Just like Brad, who couldn't do a reverse dive on our swimming team. This angelic looking red-head (my wife always greeted him with "what are you plotting now?") developed a "hang-up" on that dive. And at our school, a "hang-up" must be licked.

But nothing seemed to work. The school gave him a special cheer. We wouldn't let him go to classes. I even surprised him at 6 a.m. at the pool to help him. But everytime his body faced the moment of truth to flip itself, it would stay suspended, then slip into the water just as stubbornly as Charlie's feet stayed on the dock.

Brad knew he had to beat this dive if he were going to find himself in life. The human mind has a way of recording such failures with finality.

His counselor finally suggested, "Brad, you can't do it in practice, why not try it in an actual meet?" Brad, probably figuring he couldn't be more humiliated than he already was, dejectedly said, "I might as well."

HURRICANE ISLAND
OUTWARD BOUND
SCHOOL

Given spectators, team spirit, and the tension of competition, Brad's body miraculously turned over! The judges even gave him an average rating. And his body has so responded ever since.

Why did Brad succeed where Charlie failed? Brad had the help of synergy: People can help you produce something you can't do alone. (As a student once said it to me: "You believed in me when I didn't even believe in myself.") As a man and woman can only jointly produce a baby, it's like saying 1 + 1 = 3. As Webster defines synergy: "the doctrine that human effort cooperates with divine grace in the salvation of the soul."

I don't know why it works or how it works. But when teachers and kids totally commit their minds, hearts, bodies and souls together, you can get a Brad to do the dive or a Charlie to jump off the pier. That much I know.

So "Grandpa", I agree: we will turn education around; when we stop kidding ourselves and kids like Charlie that life can be learned in a textbook; when we stop talking about life and put ourselves on the line - also getting up at 6 a.m. to help a kid do a dive. Then a kid will know the lesson is for real.

Policemen As Teachers

Policemen and Firemen. What comes to your mind? Law and Order? Stories of cops on the "take"? Pinochle at the fire station?

Or do you visualize "teachers" counseling the kid who broke windows in the vacant house or rescuing the little girl's cat out of the tree? And did you pause to think why little kids choose policemen and firemen as their first adult models?

I recently had a hectic 24 hours that a Headmaster sometimes has that made me remember these "forgotten teachers" of our society.

It began at Sargeant F.'s office in Portland. The Sargeant had consented to give Nick, one of our students, a second lie detector test. Reluctantly so, because Nick had flunked the test several weeks before, when he denied stealing money at school.

The reader may find such measures extreme; but Hyde is built on the development of character. Lying, cheating and stealing are owned up to at school as our kids develop character, but this time we were stymied as the stealing had not stopped. Much more than the money was involved, it meant we were utterly failing with some student.

The Bath Police then helped us plant a "painted" bill. When it was taken, a local officer gave up an entire evening checking out all the hands at Hyde, finally detecting the tell-tale powder on Nick's hands.

But Nick denied it and took the lie detector test to clear himself. After he flunked, he finally confessed to some dishonesties, but maintained he was not the thief. Saying his mind was now cleared, he asked for a retest to establish his innocence, agreeing to accept the results if he failed again.

In spite of the obvious, Sargeant F. arranged the retest. He and I both knew Nick would not grow up if he did not own up to such mistakes.

The skill of detection by operator and machine is amazing. Sargeant F. asked Nick to think of a number, then, instructing him to answer in "no" to every question, used the machine to determine the number.

"So you see, Nick, if you don't tell the truth, we are going to know it." Nick was uneasy: "But what if I feel guilty about something else?"

"Nick, we all feel guilty about something, yet two out of every three people who take this test are cleared."

The machine and Sargeant F. painstakingly, but relentlessly, established that Nick was still lying when he said he had not stolen the money.

Sargeant F. went over the results with Nick and tried hard to get him to fully deal with the truth.

"All kids make mistakes, Nick. That's why our laws are easier on kids than adults. Someone helped me at your age, the same way I am trying to help you. Own up to your mistakes and begin to build a real life."

But Nick stubbornly held his position. I glanced at my watch; it was nearly 1:00. The Sargeant had spent over seven hours in two sessions trying to help Nick.

We drove back to school and shortly after, Nick ran away.

At 1:00 that night, I was jarred awake by a student's frantic phone call: "Mr. Gauld, there's a fire in the Outhouse!" (the quaint student name for our most distant dormitory.) I threw an overcoat over my pajamas and raced to the car A fire engine was parked at the gate; later I realized it was there "just in case".

I thought disaster had struck: two more firetrucks were at the scene and the dorm was engulfed in smoke. But the culprit was just a small fire in one room started by a little coffee maker, left on and forgotten.

The students and I learned some lessons watching the extreme care the firemen gave in making sure the fire was out. When we thought they were done, several men brought fans into other rooms to get rid of the smoke. This extra concern was not lost on the students, since they were able to return to their beds within an hour.

At 3:15 a.m. the phone awoke me again: The Bath Police reported that the Falmouth Police had picked Nick up on the road. Did I want him returned?

"Officer, this is a tough spot for me: Yes, I want him back, but I need him to ask to come back. His parents are weak and he's just testing their resolve." Both the officer on the phone and the one on the scene understood, for the next message was relayed: Nick was asking permission to return to school.

"Where shall I pick him up?", I asked.

"Why don't I see if the police between here and Falmouth can relay Nick home?" At 4:15 the local police gave me my last call, asking where I wanted Nick dropped.

Why was I so deeply touched by those 24 hours? Certainly by having so many professionals concerned about one little kid and one little fire. Perhaps by the little things, like the firemen trying to give the kids a good night's sleep and the officer trying to save mine. Maybe just that this kind of help stands ready every night while we sleep and it takes an upset to appreciate it.

It made me feel good that in spite of sometimes being called "pigs" and "loafers", these men were still teachers who care about kids.

Running Away - To Disaster

500,000 kids ran away from home last year. The remedy to this sickness obviously lies in a change in the way they are being raised. But when I try to help such families with the needed change, I have trouble "getting the ball out of the infield". I hope you, the readers, will help me find a better approach.

First, we Americans believe children should be raised to do their best. Not only will a child's best bring him pride and happiness, but it could even make him President.

We are instilling this American dream into our children - probably even better than the Lincolns did in Abe. But we don't begin to prepare them to actually do their best - particularly compared to the "upbringing" of Abe.

Abe Lincoln had a spartan education on a frontier farm. A 13 year old farmboy once described that Lincolnesque education: "Even nature teaches us you don't get something for nothing, Mr. Gauld. Why else does she surround honey with bees and roses with thorns?"

When Abe Lincoln faced almost inhuman demands as our Civil War President, his "upbringing" taught him to reach deeper into himself to find the courage and leadership necessary to save our Country.

But how is today's youth trained to face that moment of truth that demands his best? Where Abe reached for the fibre of his insides, would today's youth reach for a mind-expanding drug?

I picture Abe huddled by a fireside, struggling to read by its flickering light.

And today's youth lounging on a couch in a ranch house watching TV.

When the lesson came hard, Abe re-read the passage, but today's youth simply tend to change the station. Wouldn't it follow that if he finds his life a mess, he would run to find greener pastures?

But unless he stops running at some point, he will find disaster.

That's what happened to Len, the first run-away at my school.

Len came from a wealthy, mid-west suburb. He was admittedly spoiled and doing badly in school, but was now ready "to put my mind to full capacity in the hope to do my best." His counselor agreed: "...comes from a home that has offered him everything physically...has potential and if placed in the proper environment will be a credit to any institution." His parents said they would stop making things easy and do whatever was needed to get the best out of Len.

Len made a good start, but then began to slip. Christmas at home helped Len slip further. He soon saw Hyde as too much of a hassle and decided it was time to "change the station". At the initial interview, I had told both parents and Len to expect this. ("I know you and Len are sure that he won't throw in the towel, Mr. L., but just suppose he does?" Mr. L. said he certainly would not allow Len to come home.)

Mr. L's voice on the telephone was strong. He reminded Len of his commitment at the interview; that he could not quit Hyde unless he was ready to run his own life. Len looked at me and smiled. "He doesn't mean it."

Stunned, Mr. L. said: "Len, no human being is going to run over me like this, not even my own son."

Len did leave school and as usual, the child knew his parent. His father did not hold out 3 weeks. Mr. L. did refuse Len entrance when he showed up at his doorstep. He even called me daily for advice, while Len stayed with friends. (Joe, my name is mud with all the neighbors.")

Mr. L. naturally worried about Len on his own as would the parents of any 16 year old boy. "Yes, Mr. L., but that's the price for preparing a child for life with words and not with deeds. And as the time gets later, the price gets higher. It's as if Len is on an elevator going up that he must get off. If he jumps now, he will only get bloody, later on..."

But in the end, Len won. "Joe, I have no choice. If I don't let him back, my wife will end up in a basket." I pleaded with Mr. L. to stick to his guns. I warned him of the lives I'd seen lost to hospitals, jails, even suicides when parents didn't, but to no avail.

That was over six years ago. So I called Mr. L. the other day. Because it might help others, he consented to fill in the rest.

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Slap May Be Just What Child Needs

Should you ever slap a kid? How about a man teacher slapping a girl student?

I think the place of such "physical" education in American childrearing is badly misunderstood. Most people who hit kids do it for the wrong reasons - like out of their own frustrations. Most people who don't hit kids, don't do it for the wrong reasons - like out of mistaken compassion.

"Spanking", at best, has a mixed acceptance in our society, but slapping a kid is definitely out. As one educator recently said to me: "If I had to hit a kid to get the message across, I would consider myself a failure."

Yet, with this seemingly "Christian" attitude in raising kids, assaults, rapes and murders mark us as the most violent society in the world today.

We do seem to have a hang-up on physical contact. We may not slap kids, but neither do we show physical affection. If a father and son embrace or kiss, we know their roots are still in the "Old Country".

A parent may believe his reasons for not slapping a child are compassionate, but the child may receive this message: "Your attitude deserves a good smack, but I won't do it because it's personally offensive and too much of a sacrifice to my principals". In other words, "I don't care that much." To answer that educator: I slapped my son once because I had failed three times to stop a selfishness in him. I had failed, frankly, because he learned it from me. But I cared too much to let any fault hurt his best, so I slapped him hard without a trace of anger. Malcolm must have known how hard it was for me, for he never made that mistake again. That was my first "slap" and it taught me something about true giving.

I have since had to slap other kids, for many parents have this anti-physical hang-up, particularly with girls. I don't like to, but I now have the confidence and the concern to give more of myself to kids than most people are willing to give. But I just about gave my limit recently to Sally.

Sally was sent to me for an interview as sort of a "last resort." The Hyde approach seems generally successful, so we were often thought of in difficult cases, and Sally's was a beaut. She had taken complete command of her house and on the side had done in several psychiatrists. I hope the reader will remember these facts if he finds my methods with Sally too extreme. A surgeon can amputate a leg without blinking an eye if he knows it is necessary to save a patient's life. I knew if I couldn't "amputate" Sally's attitude, she was headed for a hospital, reform school, or worse. The wrong attitude in a kid left unchecked will do exactly that.

One of my teachers gave Sally the interview. The Hyde interview is an in-depth session that requires both the student and parents to take a deep look at themselves and their attitudes. Sally quickly showed she wanted none of that, so shortly the teacher had to drag Sally and her parents into my office.

After several questions, she made the same clear to me. And when I tried to turn my attention to Sally's mother to tell her what she ought to do about it, Sally "made it clear" she didn't want that either.

"Sally, you'd better understand several things. You may not want my help, but your mother has traveled over four hundred miles for my advice, so just sit quietly and listen, and when I finish, you can leave."

In response, she ignored me.

"Sally, your remarks insult me, your parents, and teenagers. I have a high regard for 16 year olds and you are going to act like one in my office. I don't let little brats like you insult them with your six year old behavior in my presence."

She was slightly shaken, but undaunted.

"Listen, Sally, I'm not your parents and I'm telling you either change that attitude around me or I will jam it down your throat."

She left in a huff, slamming things around while startled visitors looked on. But she was shocked when she found me right behind her.

The next hour would have done justice to the Keystone Cops. I would get her apology, but she was so used to winning, she couldn't resist getting in the last word. During this battle, we had crawled in and out of her family's car twice (I got in before she could lock it), I slapped her three times in response to her screaming at me, and chased her once around the grounds when she tried to get away from me. We ended up at the Duck Pond and in her raging frustration, she let go with a well-turned obsenity. With that, I picked her up, while her arms flailed away, and said, with what little breath I had left, "You either apologize or you're going in the pond." She knew I meant it and finally relented. Sally returned and sat somewhat quietly while I finished talking to her mother.

I don't know if I'll ever see Sally again, but at least I have given her one positive experience that tells her the reason her life is a mess, is not Sally; it's just Sally's attitude. That will give her a fighting chance to grow up in a society that presently can be a jungle for a teenager.

But I doubt it will work. Later, Mrs. S. was cold on the phone: "Yes, I asked you to try, but thinking about it since, I think your methods were extreme. You were irresponsible to say my attitude was the real problem just because my son is in a psychiatric hospital."

"Mrs. S., do you think your kids were born with those attitudes? You..." She hung up on me.

Father and Son: Bridging The Gap

Several questions were raised this week on the role a father should play in the growth process. A mother wrote:

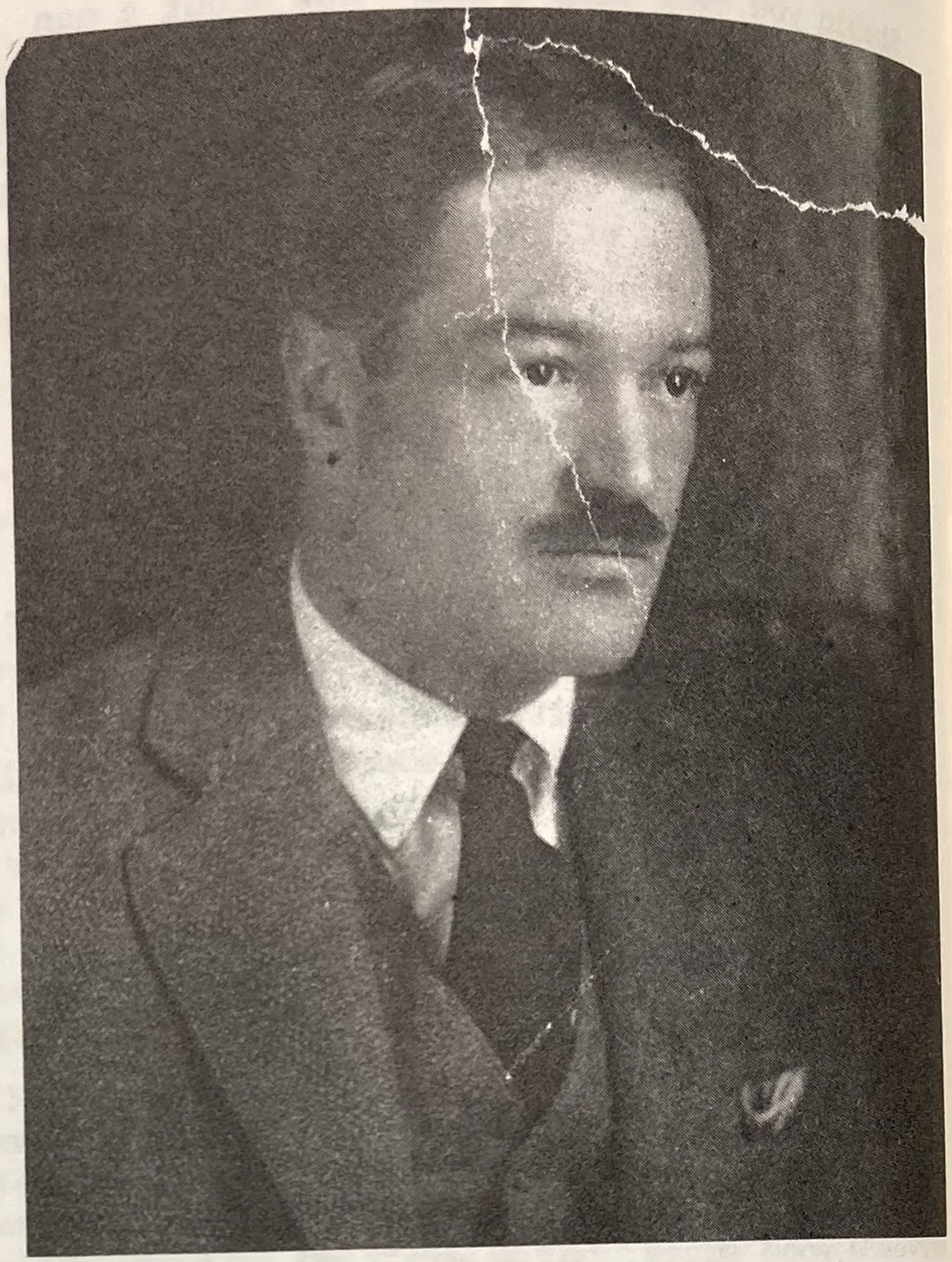
> "How can I help my husband and my oldest son bridge an understanding gap? My husband and I had such great plans for my son because of his outstanding potential in many areas. My son rejected our life-style, and after three years of struggle, torment and deduction, has come upon a lifestyle that is satisfying to him. I have been priviledged to share his defeats and victories throughout this period with him, and to see a strong, purposeful young man emerge. My husband denied himself association with our son because he couldn't stand the hurt. However, I know that both of them strongly desire a good relationship. Is there anything I can do, or is it best to leave it alone for them to handle in their own way?"

Are you and your husband separated? I think your very different attitudes to your son's growth would make any home too strained to stay together.

But the depth of your husband's commitment to your son's future may be the real problem in their relationship. An insecure parent may need the child's affection or the pride of his success, at the expense of concentrating on his future needs. Not that your husband didn't care, at the time he may have needed the reassurance of your son's love and success. Then he disassociated himself when he felt his son's rejections and failures as another blow to his own confidence.

My step-father, Brownlee, had a real commitment to my future. He didn't feel the affection for me that he seemed to need from his own sons. He had a hard time even liking me - having the normal jealousies a step-father has for the son who looks like "the other man". But he was an honorable man who considered it his responsibility to raise his wife's children. I never had the slightest doubt that he would hold back an ounce of himself in seeing that I did my best.

It's amazing how deeply kids sense and value that kind of commitment. Brownlee was hard on me, so hard it even upset his friends. Once, at 13, when his hardness crossed the line of fairness, I decided that I had had enough. But when I tried to write the letter to ask my real father if I could come and live with him, I could only burst into tears. In spite of the unfairness, even as a kid, I knew I needed my mother and Brownlee to grow up properly.



This need was even clearer when I met my real father several years later. I found it incredible how much I had of this man's looks, mannerisms and habits in spite of not seeing him since I was 5. I felt I knew his every thought.

I hadn't received Dad's Christmas present that year; it had apparently been lost in the mail. But when I pressed him to know at least what it had been, Dad was vague. I knew him well enough to know Dad had forgotten to get me one.

Why wasn't I hurt by Dad's seemingly lack of commitment to me? Because in an indirect way, his commitment was there. Just as I knew him, he probably knew me. In spite of how much he disapproved of Brownlee's methods, I think Dad knew I was in the right hands.

I eventually understood how right those hands were, many years later. Sometimes it takes your mind a long time to learn what your heart already understands. At least Brownlee and I understood our hearts before he died, so we did exchange some love and affection in our own clumsy and awkward way.

So I am trying to say: Just as Brownlee and mother provided the commitment for my growth while Dad looked on, you have provided the commitment for your son's growth while your husband looked on.

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Momma Bear Could Teach Us

Kids are in far more trouble than people realize. Unless we act soon, the inability of our kids to face life will reach tragic proportions.

A major psychiatric hospital that once treated a few adolescents now numbers patients that are 70% teen-agers. "Drop Out" and "escape" by drugs are household words. There are Centers in every major city to help our half a million "run-aways".

Why can't these kids face life?

To say they are "spoiled" touches only the tip of the iceberg. The real problem is that their parents (and society) have over-protected them.

Parents have tragically shielded these kids from defeat and frustrations out of mistaken "love". So when kids meet their "moment of truth", they are unable to rely upon themselves. Then they run away.

A Mother Bear could teach these parents how to prepare the young for life. She gradually teaches her cub how to hunt for himself. And when the cub makes mistakes, like attacking a porcupine, she does not step in. This is a vital part of the cub's "education". After a year, she viciously turns on her cub, chasing it up a tree. Then she walks away, never to see her loved one again. This is truly an act of love. She kills her cub's affection, making him doubt he ever wants to find this mother-turned-monster again. It's only then that the cub begins to fully rely upon his own potential to live.

My wife says, "give kids a kick in the pants and a bear hug". Society calls it "kick the bird out of the nest". But do we? Our failure is building many insecure kids.

Like Ben. He had made a mess of his life, but Ben still wasn't ready to really help himself. I took him to school anyway. His parents were so defeated, I hoped they were now ready for a "Mother Bear" commitment. And boy, he needed one. Ben had never faced a "moment of truth" honestly. He had lied so often that twice I had to slap him fairly hard in the face to get him to tell the truth.

Ben sobbed, "Mr. Gauld, I've been a liar my whole life, are you sure I can change?"

"Ben, you are an accomplished liar; one of the best I have worked with. Now just apply that same talent and effort to the truth and you'll be amazed at what you accomplish. That, I promise you."

But "giving your best" is hard, so a vacation at home weakened Ben's resolve. He ran away, hoping to blackmail his folks into letting him stay home. His parents wavered: Maybe they hadn't prepared him for this challenge; they had spoiled him, hadn't spent enough time with him, and so on.

"Mr. Gauld, we think Ben needs your school, but if we force him to return, we're afraid in his present state we might break him."

At this moment of truth, they could think only of negatives: What they and their son had not done in the past and fearfully what might happen in the future. Exactly the opposite of Mamma Bear and her cub.

But I may have won a tough one the other day too. Nan came from a wealthy eastern suburb, was heavily into drugs and a fast crowd. Again, hoping her parents would pull a "Mother Bear", I accepted Nan, over her objections, to my summer program. She promptly ran away right at the interview.

Her Dad almost made the fatal mistake of going to look for her, calling the police, etc., but I caught him in time. "Mr. N., if you want Nan to grow up, you must make it clear to her that you are going to get the best out of her, regardless of the cost to her or to yourselves..."

Mr. N. worked hard at keeping a stiff upper lip and with Mrs. N.'s help, he won. Nan sheepishly came back, not knowing what to say.

I put my arm around her. "Nan, we all have trouble when we take ourselves too seriously. I keep that toy monkey up there in my chandelier as my own reminder. Your bluff proves you are just a scared kid who needs help. So let's begin the business of growing up."

If this is the turning point in Nan's life, Mrs. N.'s new-found faith pulled the family through their "moment of truth". She believed, like Mamma Bear, if they tried to do their best, God and life would take care of the rest.

Parents need to respond to this deeper instinct of Mamma Bear, to bring out the best in children.

A wise man said it: "Your children are not your children...They come through you, but not from you, and though they are with you yet they belong not to you...You are the bows from which your children as living arrows are sent forth...Let your bending in the archer's hand be for gladness; for even as he loves the arrow that flies, so he loves also the bow that is stable."

Professional Ethics and Watergate

Recently I received a long distance call from a former student during his lunch hour. Ray wanted to know what I "thought" about Watergate. This from a student who had left my school after refusing the discipline of a haircut in such bitterness that he and his father took their case to my Trustees.

Later at a school meeting, kids were bothered enough to want to know how I personally "felt" about Watergate: A rare time when a teacher can and should answer not as a professional, but as an individual. I have strong feelings about my Country, and have been deeply hurt by Watergate. I found myself in tears as I expressed the depth of those feelings.

When I was finally stopped on the street and asked what the kids felt about Watergate, I decided I had a good subject for a column - until I tried to write it.

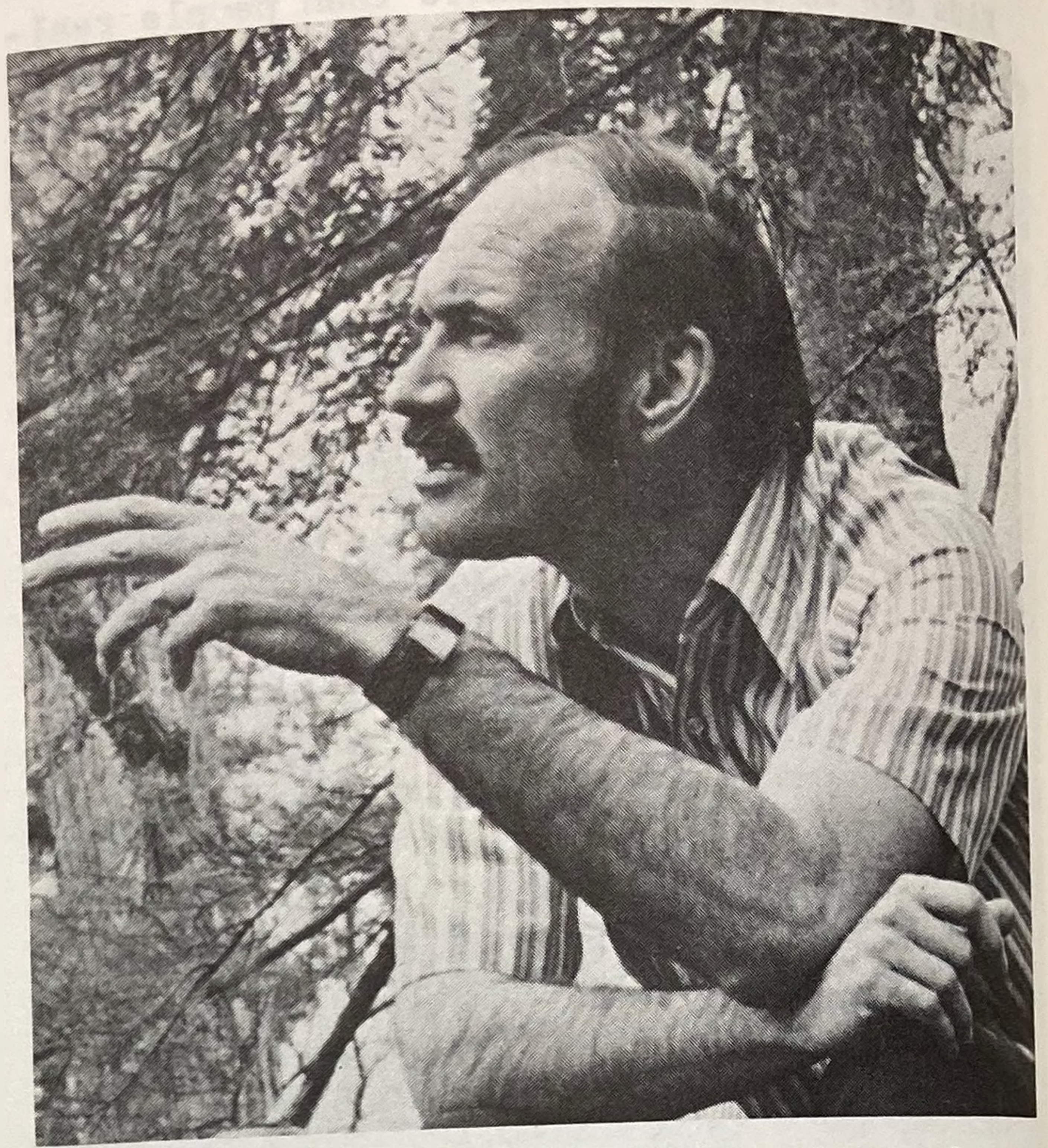
I have struggled with this dilemma: My personal feelings were so strong, can I objectively report what kids feel about Watergate or will I unconsciously "slant" readers to my personal point of view? Professional integrity makes Judges sometimes disqualify themselves in cases and doctors to avoid administering to relatives.

But such a code of ethics has never been rigorously applied to the teaching profession as it has in law and medicine. Yet the damaging effects of teachers failing to educate ethically are far greater. Hitler said: "Give me the child 'til he is nine and he will be mine for life." Certainly the frightening success of the Hitler Youth Movement supports his point.

Once while evaluating a school, I listened to a teacher persuasively present a political - one I personally favored - to his class. Yet I recommended the teacher be put on probation or fired. The instructor who cannot "feel" the sacred trust that separates teaching from indoctrination is in the wrong profession.

The best History teacher I ever had was virtually a Communist. Yet he made us consistently aware of material presented with the authority of a Historian as opposed to his personal view as an individual. I doubt any of us changed our political views, but many lively discussions and arguments taught us a great deal about our Country.

Psychiatry, like teaching, has also failed to have an effective code of ethics for its professionals. Once in an interview, a psychiatrist-father took issue with my approach in an in-depth interview with his daughter. I reminded him he was in the interview in the role of a father, so he had to automatically disqualify himself as a professional. He incredibly answered: "I can't." It amazed me that he failed to understand his answer condemned himself as unfit either as a father or a psychiatrist.



But in contrast was the father of one of my students who trained analysts. Hal had a tendency to be over-protective and once when his son considered leaving school, he called to discuss the situation with me. He knew I asked for and respected his advice on our program, but this time I cut him off with: "Hal, you stay out of this!" Being an outstanding psychiatrist and a fine human being, Hal immediately saw because he was a father, he was wandering into an area where he didn't belong. He did stay out of it and his son, therefore, had to solve the problem himself. Thanks to the confidence his son gained from solving such situations, both Hal and I enjoyed his boy's graduation from Hyde last month.

So I hope I separate my own strong "feelings" about Watergate and answer as a professional: "How do the kids feel about Watergate?"

A wise aunt once said to her nephew: "Don't listen to what people say, Henry, just watch what they do." The kids marched on Washington over Vietnam, demonstrated over pollution, and burned down buildings over education because they didn't trust the motives of our society. Now when Watergate gives them solid evidence that our leaders have, in fact, lied, cheated, and stolen, they are strangely silent and do nothing.

They are silent because the courage and integrity we have shown in trying to get to the truth of Watergate has reassured them of our deeper motives as no other act has done.

If we now handle justice as honestly as we have sought the truth, we will develop a bond of trust with the kids that will help us repair the damage Watergate has done to America many times over.

The Courage To Grow
August 5, 1973

Try Answering These Three Questions

When is our society going to wake up to the fact that it is doing a lousy job of raising kids? I'm not a Historian, but I'll bet that few civilizations have a worse record.

I find myself calling parents "childish" and "irresponsible" more than I do kids these days. The other day I told a mother that if she wants her son to grow up, she better send her husband to his room and stand him in a corner.

I may sound harsh, but I will not tolerate an attitude any longer that allows homes and schools to empty of kids, while our hospitals, reform schools and run-away houses fill up. There's nothing wrong with these kids that more grown up "grown ups" won't solve.

We've got to stop coddling, indulging, spoiling, protecting and sheltering our kids. We need to find a sense of "toughness" again.

Does it apply to you? Try answering the following questions.

Do you have any respect for "survival of the fittest?"

Could it be at all healthy for a little boy to gain his living by competing with dogs for scraps of meat?

Would you allow a 15 year old son to refuse a leg amputation doctors tell you is needed to save his life because he wants to play football?

If you answered a confident "no" to these three questions, then you are not open to a deeper understanding of the mysteries of growth.

First, the salmon teaches us of the purpose in life. He fights incredible odds to return upstream to the place of his birth. Then he fights the few that survive for the right to mate. Thus, nature's law of "survival of the fittest" allows only the strongest and most courageous salmon to spawn the young. This insures the unborn their best chance for life.

Secondly, two American scientists visiting an Eskimo tribe were shocked to find a boy fighting sled dogs for scraps of meat thrown to them by the drivers. When asked why, the Eskimos explained that the boy had lost his parents, so now he had to fend for himself. The anger and disgust of the scientists at this custom at first bewildered the Eskimos, but then they smiled patiently when they finally understood.

"To be an Eskimo orphan is both an opportunity and an honor", explained the elders. "You have lived with us; who do you consider our greatest hunters?" The Americans named three and the Eskimos replied: "They are all orphans."

Finally, Dwight Eisenhower got gangrene from a leg wound at 15. The doctors urged amputation to save his life, but Ike balked. "I would rather be dead than crippled and not be able to play ball." His parents were against contact sports, but since they gave their children the right to make such decisions, they unhappily accepted Ike's refusal.

My wife, Blanche, has an uncanny instinct for the proper growth of children, so I was curious to see what she would to if it had happened to Malcolm at 15.

Blanche: "Well, I would check with other doctors".

Joe: "Suppose they agreed?"

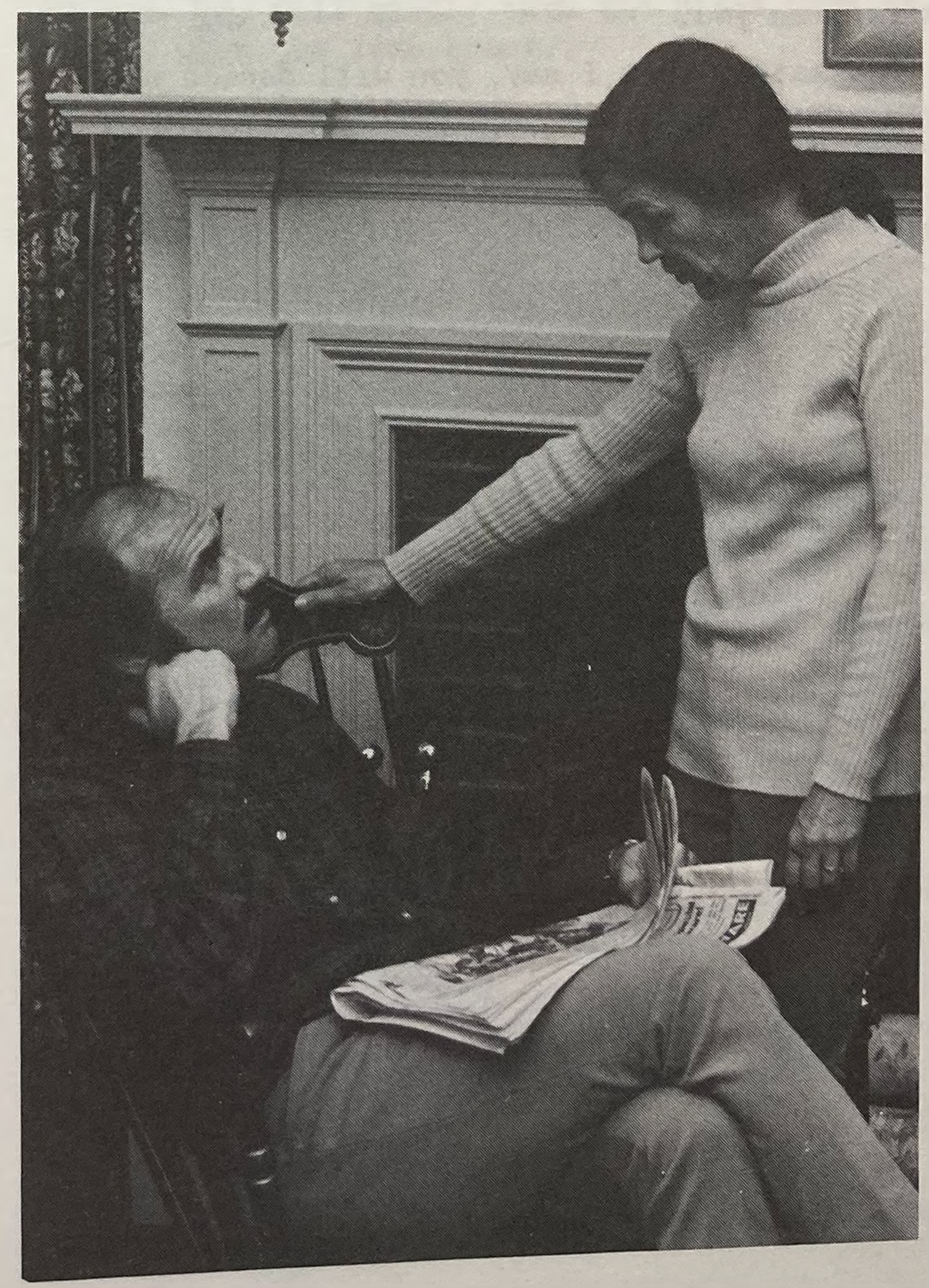
Blanche: "Well, then I would talk to Malcolm."

Joe: "But suppose he still balked?"

Blanche: (after a long pause) "It would kill me, but I guess I would have to go along with his refusal."

Is there something that instinctively the salmon, the Eskimos, the Eisenhowers, and Blanche have learned about life that the rest of us have failed to fully understand?

Wouldn't we stop the salmon from fighting or try to eliminate the hardship of their return? That would kill the species. Wouldn't we



The Courage To Grow
August 12, 1973

An Open Letter To Laurie On Sex

"Laurie, now that you are 16 and will decide just 'how far' you want to go with a boy, I want you to know where I stand.

"First, a good sex urge is healthy. My generation was brought up to believe sex was very wrong to keep us from making tragic mistakes that would hurt our lives. But in the end, this approach tragically hurt many of us. The girl who 'gave in' developed a reputation in town over night. Pregnancy required the girl to leave school and her family might even move to another town. I remember a beautiful high school classmate who solved her pregnancy problem by jumping in front of a train.

"Even girls who didn't 'give in' often became 'inhibited' and ended up seeing a psychiatrist to get untangled. Still others who suppressed their guilt, felt compelled to 'run around' after they were married.

"So I hope you develop a healthy sex interest in boys.

"But while we were hurt being 'repressed', I'm afraid your generation will eventually suffer even more because of the lack of restrictions on sex. You will meet girls whose mothers supply them with the 'pill', girls who casually tell you they solved the pregnancy by abortion and still others who are proud of their affairs. Their attitudes will place a great strain on you.

"No matter what I say, you will decide when you are going to have sex with a boy. But I will be very disappointed in you if you make this step without fully accepting the consequences of your action.

"If you become pregnant, I am sure you will ask my advice. Look at our choices:

"Abortion: I have spent my life helping kids grow. Could I advise you to abort a life without being the supreme hypocrite?

"Marriage: Would the premature responsibility block you and your husband's careers? Would the child suffer from your unconscious resentment of being trapped?

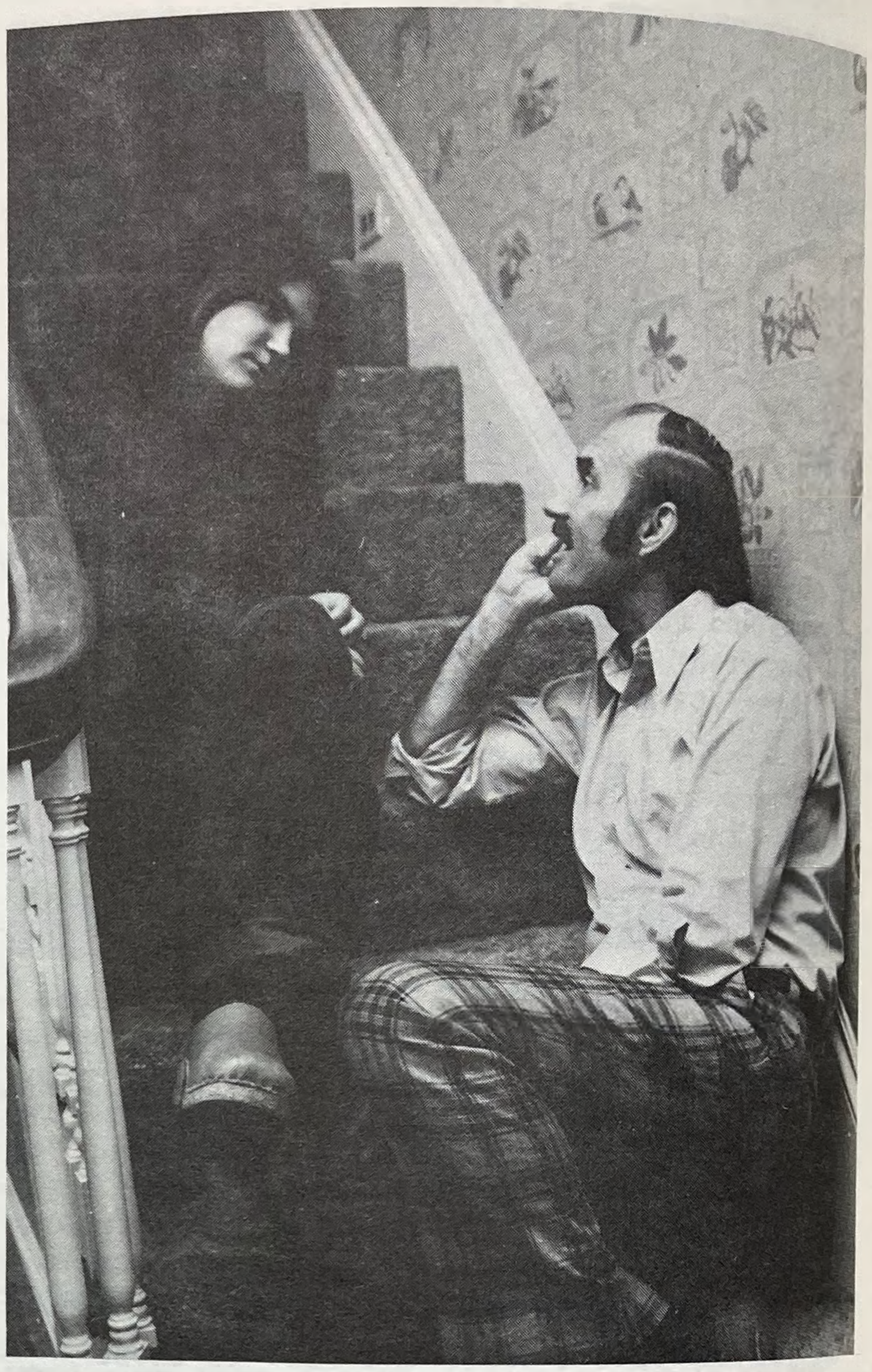
"Place the baby for adoption: You know the way we feel about each other as a family. Can we live with the fact that one of our own is out there somewhere, unclaimed by us?

"Let your mother and me raise the child: Could we emotionally survive in a home where you're the mother, but we're the parents?

"So which option do I recommend? Each one requires me to compromise someone's growth.

"But suppose you're sure of no pregnancy, why not have sex then?

"I know you have too much pride to let yourself be used for sex. But suppose through time you develop real trust with a particular boy and you both feel ready to handle sex. Are you sure you will both be mature enough to separate your interest in sheer sex from your interest in each other? If not, not only will the doubt kill the relationship, but by making the affair more than it really was, you will lose confidence in yourself.



"And after, what of future relationships? Each time you will be older and more emotionally mature. Can you then make these relationships sexless and still feel you both are deeply sharing? But then if you let each relationship end in sex, when will you begin to learn how to deeply share something with a man without sex? It is that kind of sharing that is necessary to make sex an important and enjoyable part of love and marriage.

"So you should have a desire to have sex, but you need the ability to control that drive. And when the impulse seems too strong to resist, think of the many people who have developed 'hang-ups' in our sex-oriented society; whose lives seem tangled by unfulfilled or perverted desires. Then with patience and understanding you will learn what eludes so many, the normal growth of sex into love."

The Courage To Grow
August 19, 1973

Tell Her, Granny!

Raising kids is a serious business. And it should be the first order of business - of every single member of our society.

It is both irresponsible and insensitive for our society to allow parents to be the sole authority in raising children - except in blatant cases of child beating or neglect. Yes, when parents do a good job, we ought to leave them alone. But if they don't, we ultimately care for those kids in jails, hospitals and welfare. So we have a right to "advise".

But more important, kids belong to all of us; they are all our children. If parents are making a mess of it, both we and they must realize help is needed and should be welcomed. Consider this letter from an Old Orchard grandmother:

> "Dear Sir:
>
> "The situation is over and past now and I'm sure I handled it wrongly... What should I have done to be fair?
>
> "I was taking care of several grandchildren...I saw Kay climbing up on the family car. I immediately went outside and told her to get down. I assumed she wanted something inside the car and told her I would be glad to get it for her. She refused to speak to me and began to cry. I told her she could cry all she wanted, but to stay off the car.
>
> "Just moments later, I looked out and Kay was nowhere in sight. All the kids and I called and called, but no response. I was still up in the woods when I heard the kids shout that they had found her.
>
> "She had hidden a few feet from the house and within earshot of our call.
>
> "I practically dragged the kid into the house and was furious with an older sister who was cuddling her.
>
> "At that moment the mother came in as cool as a cucumber and said I got too excited that the child was in the habit of doing it. Nobody had told me that.
>
> "I told the mother if Kay were my child I'd warm her fanny. The mother reached for a nearby yardstick and gave the kid a couple of whacks not because she, the mother, wanted to, but to satisfy me. The kid screamed blue murder, which she finds very easy. The mother went back to work & the older sister continued to cuddle Kay. Kay had stopped crying the minute her mother went through the door.
>
> "How should I have handled the situation? They say you can't teach an old dog new tricks, but here is one old grandmother who is willing to learn by her mistakes.
>
> "Very sincerely thankful for any admonition I'm sure I deserve."

You're not going to get a scolding from me. You acted with concern and patience, bringing a little truth to - what I guess is - your daughter-in-law's children. As you perceived, Kay has learned that crying or hiding will bail her out of trouble. Her sister simply copies what her mother does to a crying child - cuddle it. Even her mother copied what you, a real mother, would do when she spanked Kay.

I suggest you have a real "granny" talk with the mother. She needs real help and I think below the surface she realizes her approach is wrong and knows she's making a mess of raising her kids.

If she's a big person who cares, she can simply say to her kids: Just as you are sometimes bad, I have been a bad Mommy. But aren't we lucky to have a special "granny" who loves us enough to come and help you and Mommy straighten things out?

Of course, there is a danger that the family will become dependent upon you, but "one old grandmother who is willing to learn by her mistakes" isn't going to let that happen. I am sure you will gladly turn the reins back to mother when the time comes.

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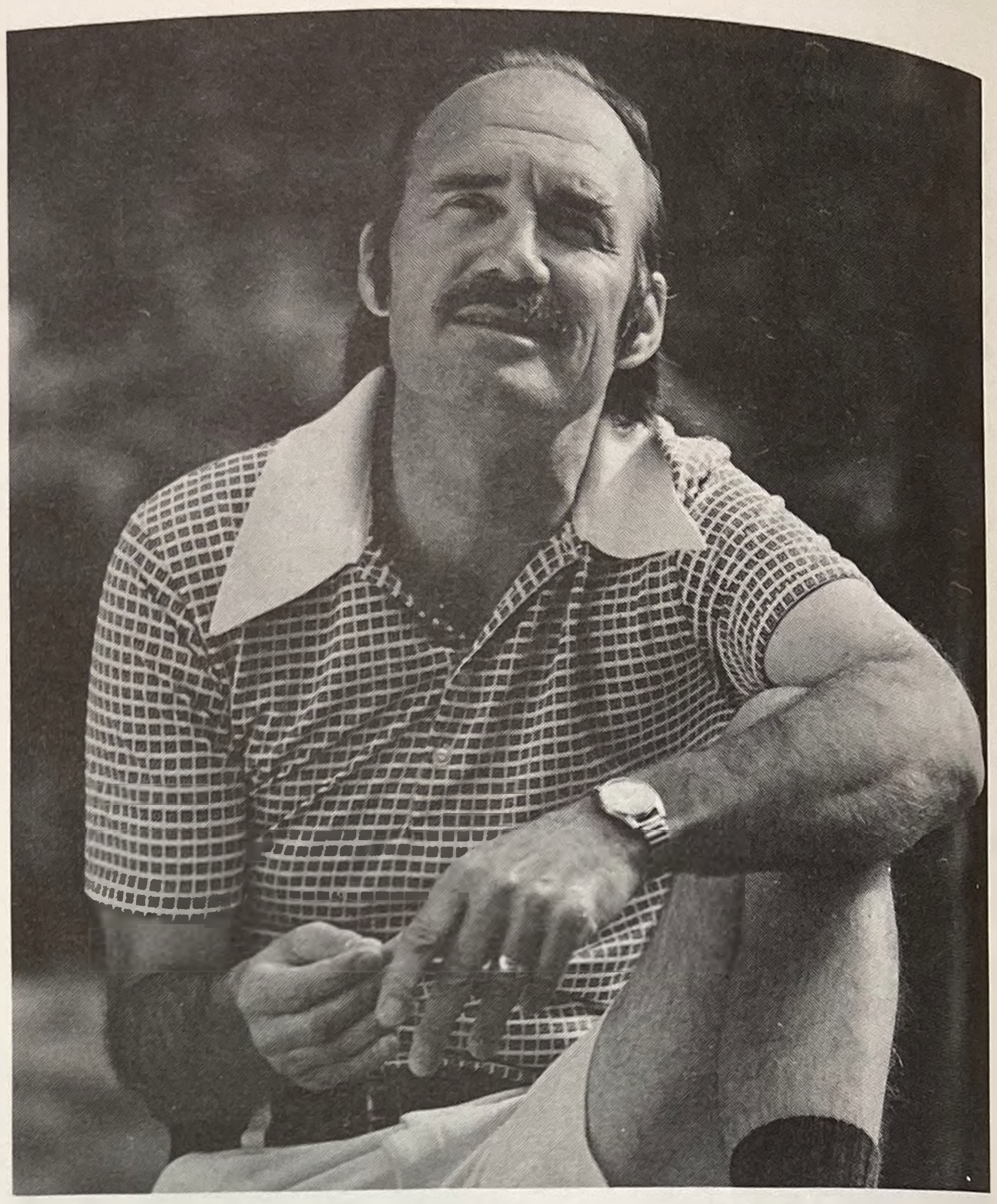
The Courage To Grow
August 26, 1973

"Hard To Hear With Your Mouth Open"



Why don't more American families today use the help of grandparents in raising kids? I sense parents are insecure and mistakenly need to prove "they know how to do it". But it's a tragedy that grandma and pa's wealth of wisdom on growth is being lost.

I am still discovering how much "Papa" - my grandfather - incredibly knew about life and how much he helped me without my knowing it.

We kids thought Papa belonged in the stone age. Mother said his idea of national defense was to build a wall 50 miles around Portland. He was a tight lipped Mainer who might say three or four words - in a good year. I once observed the following encounter on the street.

Papa: "Hello, Bill."

Bill: "Hello, Mr. Warren".

Now, normally for Papa, that "said it all". But Papa was running for State Senator that year, so he had to do some campaigning. He "smoothly" continued:

Papa: "Gonna vote for me, Bill?"

Bill: "Nope".

That, of course, took care of that.

They tell this story at Papa's mill. Once they made a very major investment in new machinery that not only they couldn't get working, but a rival paper company wrote suggesting the process was an infringement on their pattern rights. The Company President asked Papa for advice, Papa studied the letter overnight and the next day reported back.

President: "Well, Joe, are we infringing?"

Papa : "Yup".

President: (horrified) "What'll we do?"

Papa : "Jest tell 'em their's works and ours' doesn't".

They never heard from the other company again.

I was a Senior in high school before I first realized Papa was aware of me as a person. We had Thanksgiving dinner at our house, and Papa came to see me play football in the morning. I didn't think about it until I found out later he didn't like football. Why did he do it? Then I realized while sports played a big part of my life, my parents had never seen me play.

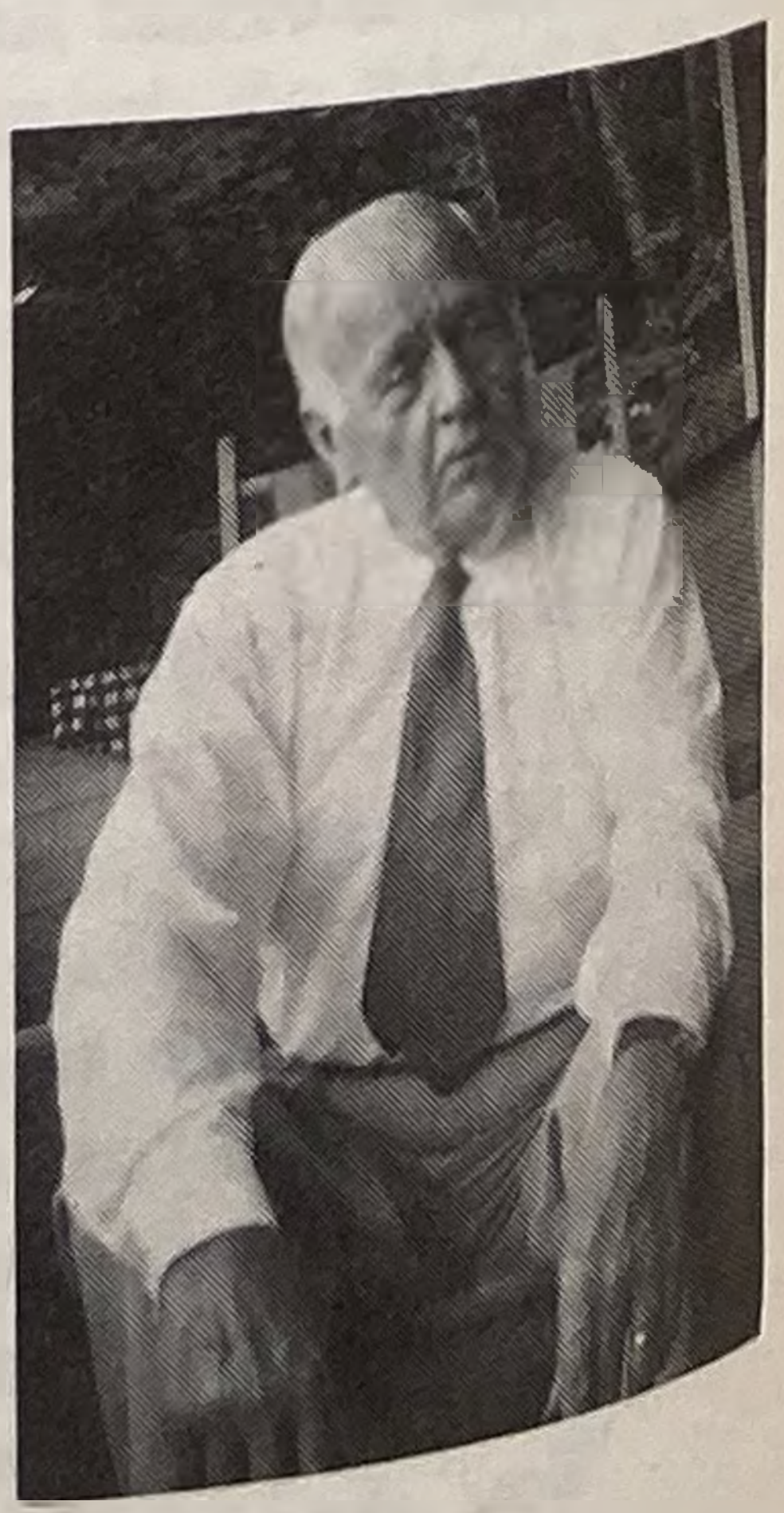
Later in college, I joked to Papa I might "condescent" to come to work in his mill. He said with a dead serious face: "No, you'd be no good at it." He seemed to know I was only half joking, and at that point in my life I would have accepted an offer to ride on his coattails.

When I first taught, my brother Tom was considering teaching and was quickly offered a job at my school. We thought teaching at the same school was a great idea, but Mother phoned us that Papa was terribly upset by the news and called it a bad mistake. Papa had never interfered in our lives, and we couldn't imagine anything getting him upset. That was enough to make us change our minds. Today Tom and I both realize the idea would have been a tragic mistake, for we needed to "cut the cord".

Sometime later, I casually mentioned to Papa: "I think Tom ought to be in the mill." I was shocked to hear Papa say, "that'd be nice." Tom did go to work in the mill and eventually left for a successful career in the paper industry. Tom's leaving must have been a great disappointment for Papa, for Tom was the last of a century of the Warren family in the mill. But Papa never said a word.

It seems amazing that a man could say so little and have so much effect. How did he do it? Papa had a saying that parents would do well to think about.

"It's hard to
hear with your
mouth open".



Learning By Digging A Pit

We need to completely overhaul education; especially correcting the mistake of thinking academic growth is the key to help kids find themselves.

The mind cannot lead the body, heart and soul, it can only interpret our deeper understandings. Think of what is meant by "soul-searching" and "straight from the heart". But instead, we teach knowledge without understanding and breed new words like "hang-up" and "con-artist".

Phil was a classic example. He came from a broken home, of parents who were distinguished educators. While both may have been intellectual giants, they were emotionally childish. They hadn't spoken to each other in 14 years and had vowed never to so speak again. No wonder they agreed - separately - they had botched the job with Phil and were now ready to learn.

Phil himself had the "moves" of a young professor. Called a master con-artist in a tough interview, Phil smoothly agreed with an engaging smile that he needed to change.

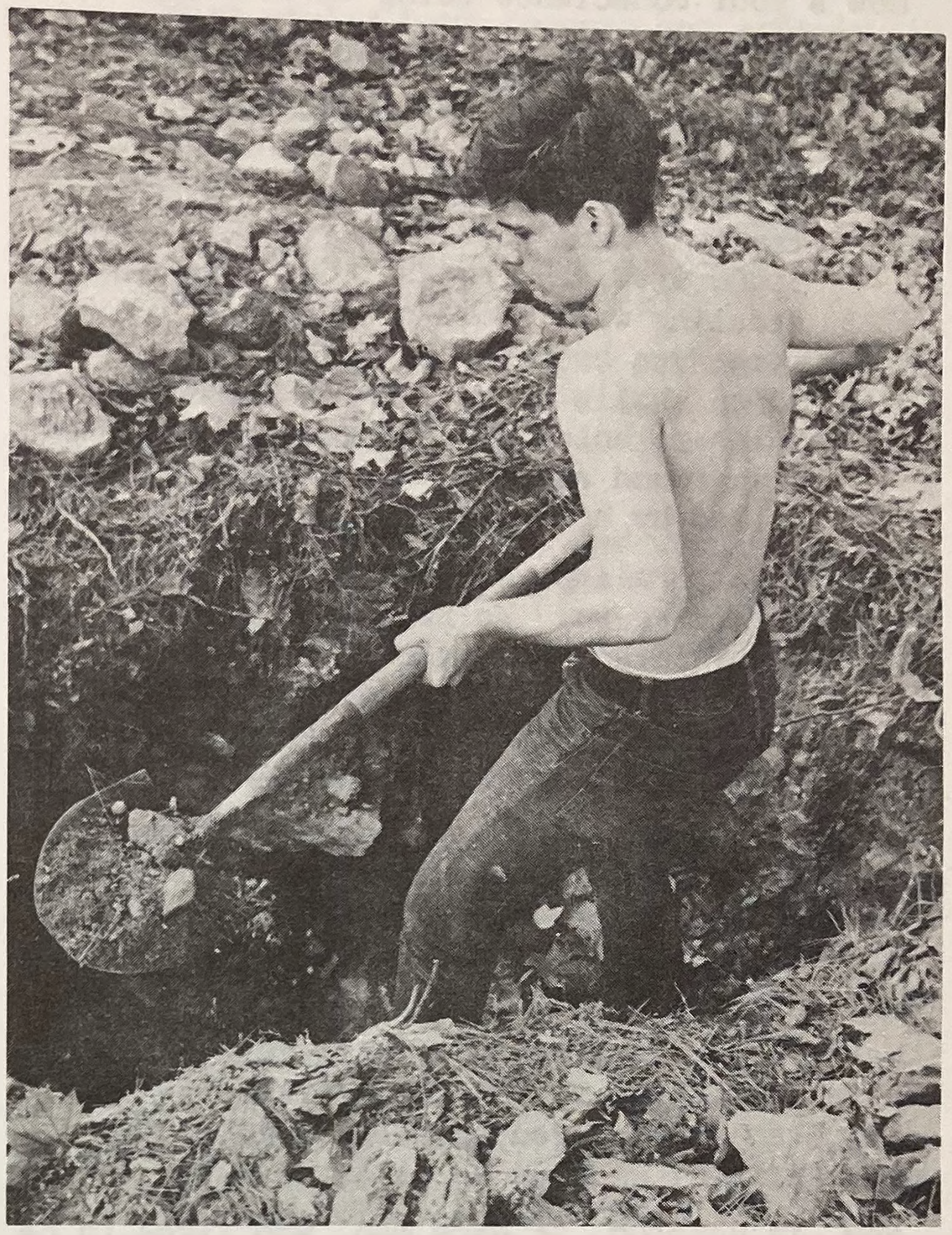
We got off to a rocky start. Phil promptly spoke out at the first school meeting like a seasoned veteran. Parent counseling ended in each discussing the "atrocities" of the other, ignoring why Phil couldn't live with either one of them. The sins of 17 years of mismanaged growth began to seem insurmountable.

But I have learned: "Don't listen to what people say, watch what they do. In spite of their vowed silence, both parents did come for a conference in the same room with Phil. This gave me hope they would sacrifice personal pride for Phil's future. Later, Dr. P. did have tears streaming down his face as he told me how moved he was by our graduation exercises. A Hyde graduation is deeply moving, but any man who could be so affected by watching kids must have given his son real emotions somewhere along the way.

Phil continued to survive at Hyde by his intellectual wit and "cool moves", disguising his true growth. He gave one performance where he publicly confessed to smoking and almost convinced me of his sincerity. But the school kept chipping away at his intellectual armor and finally following a run-in with a female teacher, the dam broke. And did it break! He insulted several teachers, physically threatened another, then had to be forceably brought into my office by trainees.

"I'm not going to lecture you, Phil, in spite of the deepest insults to a faculty I can remember. It's just too late for that. Frankly, I am neither surprised nor sorry by your actions, for you played the same game here you have played everywhere else."

"Simply decide if you think you really need our help. If not, just leave and live your own life. But if you decide yes, you are going to grow up. No words, just deeds. First, your apology to the faculty will be to box the teacher you physically threatened. Secondly, you will get a shaved haircut and begin to look like the boy you are. Then you will dig a very deep pit to figuratively bury your old image. Finally, you will work on the grounds and live by yourself until you are proven ready to join the Hyde community again."

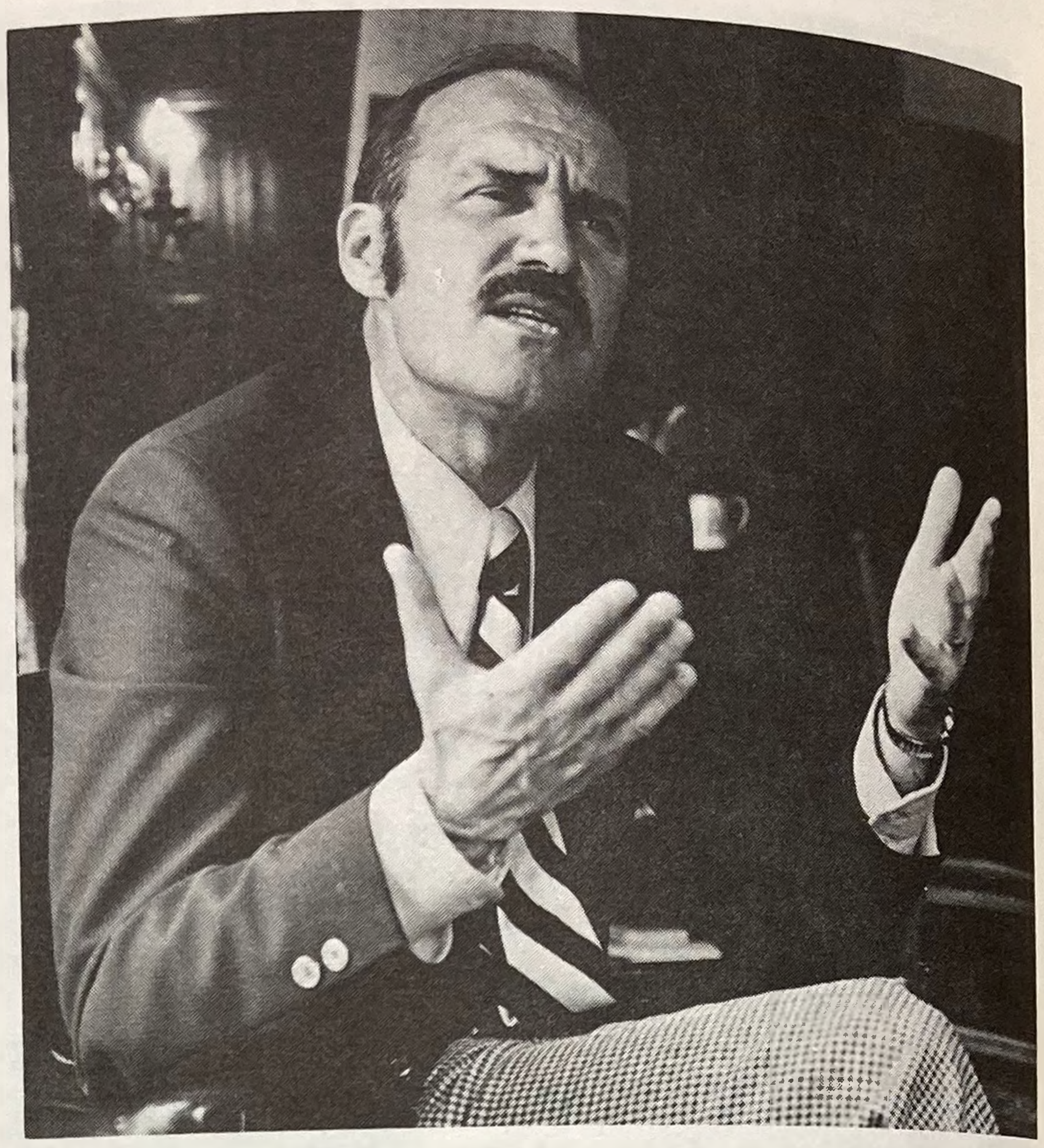


Phil decided he needed our help. His bout in the ring taught him a new respect for his teachers, and to his credit, he did not quit. After a haircut, he came to get me to inspect his pit. I jumped down to admire the six foot depth and neatly trimmed sides, then I looked back at Phil. He was smiling down at me, hands on hips, sweat glistening on his face and newly shaven hair. Sweat he proudly didn't wipe away. As I told him the story of a pit in my own childhood, I knew I was finally talking to a boy.

Phil earned his way back and then felt compelled to speak to the school community. For the first time, his words were disjointed, his voice cracked as he told them how he was really afraid of people, and tears came when he said how much it hurt to say so.

It was his first speech as a man.

How's Your Conscience Today?



How's your conscience doing these days?

I began my very first column:

> "KIDS ARE running off the track parents have laid for them. Some of them way off: more than 500,000 ran away from home last year, another 5,000 died from drugs. Cheating and stealing were wide-spread; police were even used to keep order in school halls. One teen-ager used a knife to hold up another on a school playground and then was shot and killed by his victim's gun.
>
> "This morality so shocks it has paralyzed us. We're like Bugs Bunny in an old cartoon. He looks out the window to find his house on the track of an on-rushing train and simply pulls down the shade..."

I thought every one was so concerned and guilty about what was happening to kids today that someone like me simply needed to talk about it to open up the floodgates. I mean, we're all really concerned, right?

Well, a little later, in California, a young man voted in high school "Most Likely to Succeed", raped, murdered and decapitated over a dozen girls.

Now, in Houston, "A nice man, who likes to be around kids", helped by two teen-agers, allegedly tortured, sexually abused and killed about two and a half dozen boys.

And what do we feel about these horrors? Well, it's hard for me to tell. Nobody's ever written me about them; I haven't heard them discussed; and I can't find any news about them in the paper anymore. Of course, that's understandable considering the really serious problems we are having with the economy and the unbelievable price of meat that's keeping us awake at night. And then, Hank Aaron only needs another dozen homers to break Ruth's record, so it's hard keeping too many important numbers in our heads.

Oh, that's not it? Well, maybe those murders are too impersonal since we didn't really know those kids. Now if Susie Smith had been raped, murdered and decapitated and Johnny Jones, the freckle faced kid down the block had been "handcuffed to a specially constructed plywood board, sexually abused and finally strangled", then we would really get upset. But heck, most of those kids were just unknown run-aways. We won't even be able to identify them from the bits of bones, hair and flesh that the police are digging up.

Oh, that's too callous? Well, maybe its just the sheer numbers. Now back in the 20s, we really got upset over the Leopold and Loeb "thrill-killing" of one kid and we hung over radios to follow the Lindbergh kidnapping. I guess once Hitler started stuffing people in ovens by the millions, the torturing or killing of some kids by the dozen doesn't really seem big news anymore. Not that we are like the Nazis -- they were sick. When it happens here, someone is, well, really sick. Being "Most Likely to Succeed" can do something to you.

But the problem is not being ignored. No Sir. I am delighted to say the whole problem is about to be completely solved. In the good old American way, someone had to be to blame, and naturally, parents fingered the police. The police were not watching out for these kids! But it turns out the police couldn't keep track because 5,000 Houston kids had run away from parents. Then someone looked further and now it turns out that we've got over one million run-aways in America right now.

So it's a relief to report Congress has now taken the "bull by the horns". A Senator has proposed $10,000,000. a year to provide "temporary shelter care" to take care of such run-aways! That will at least keep those kids out of the rain, so now we can get back to the real struggle of figuring out what the hell we're going to do about the price of meat.

That doesn't take care of the murders, but if they get worse, somebody in Washington can appropriate money for "permanent shelter care" to take care of the victims.

Oh, this was a nasty column? Well, when you spend a life working with kids, they become such a part of your growth that you are cursed with the feeling that they are all your children. And right now my children are being eaten alive by a society whose ignorance and insensitivity not only spawn sadistic murderers, but train kids to be the victims as well.

Sex and The Schoolchild

DEAR READERS: OUR SOCIETY HAS NEVER HAD THE COURAGE TO DEAL WITH SEX, SO THAT OUR KIDS HAVE BEEN LEFT IN THE DARK. THIS IS THE FIRST OF THREE ARTICLES THAT I HOPE WILL REVEAL TO YOU THE COST: WHAT KIDS ARE REALLY THINKING ABOUT SEX.

A major study concludes that kids rely upon friends and personal experience to learn about sex. Modern sex education courses are a poor second and parents a dead last.

A questionnaire I recently gave to both parents and their children confirmed this study. One question asked: "How openly do (did) you discuss sex at home?" Sixty percent of the parents complained they were unable to talk sex to their own parents, but happily 15% reported problems talking sex to their own children. Sounds like real progress doesn't it? But when their children answered the same question, 59% complained they were unable to talk sex with their parents!

Why does this parent-child communication gap on sex persist in each generation? It is my considered opinion that we can't deal with a kid's sex attitude because we have never really come to grips with our own. So we are never sharing our real feelings about sex with kids, but rather how we think we ought to feel. As a result, our messages to kids lack conviction and our kids know it. Without confidence in adult guidance, they go to their friends and the blind lead the blind.

I have a box outside my office where students drop anonymous notes to keep me posted on their attitudes. Some of their notes on sex are well worth your thoughts.

Note how difficult it is for some students to talk about even simple sex attitudes:

> "One thing that bothers me is not having a girlfriend. It may sound weird, but it bugs me. I am afraid, or should I say inhibited to make any moves...I am 16 and it gets to you! I don't think I'm completely alone but it's really murder.

> "I'm afraid to let anyone know this - I've written this over 4 times and each one was hedging and not what I wanted to get down. This is as close as I feel I can come."

Bitterness over adult attitudes helps get this student off on the wrong foot:

> "My real problem is accepting and believing in advice from adults. I really try, but I really can't seem to trust them. I am even semi-scared to talk to you.

> "Most adults have teenage sex grossly misunderstood. I think they feel that we want to 'do it in the road' just for the sake of doing it. I personally do it because it expresses an emotional feeling to another person in a way which nothing else can."

I find few students who have sex attitudes they can build on - even when they don't "indulge". Consider the vulnerability of this student:

> "I have never gone to bed with any boy. It's not because I'm scared or anything, it's just that I feel that there aren't any guys around who I feel I could have sex with. I have been used and hurt so many times that I don't know what or how to trust. How can I learn when I'm being used and when I'm not?"

Or the seeds of mistrust in this girl:

> "I myself find boys a very difficult problem. In all my experiences I have found that they are out for one thing. It really makes me weary of getting into anything with anyone. Until someone can respect me for me, I will stay a virgin. When you refuse their 'unselfish' proposal, you feel like you have done something horribly wrong and 'everyone does it - it's just enjoyment' and 'I can't be without you'. I consider myself to be somewhat old-fashioned about sex, but I just can't see sex for fun."

Finally, a girl goes bad:

> "From my past experience with sex, I found them quite enjoyable. But, since I am a girl, I was always wondering whether the guy was using me or if this was his way to show his emotions towards me. I always was brought down by that thought. Also, a guy usually says that if you 'love' him, you'll have sex with him. That's what made me wonder whether or not I really knew what love was. I finally decided that I wouldn't go chasing 'love', I'd wait for it to come to me. I lost my virginity at age 16 - at the time I didn't mind, but later on, I thought about it a lot and found that it really does bother me. I can't let it hold me back, even though it has been. I need help! How can

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Self-confidence and Sex Among Teenagers

DEAR READERS: A MAJOR STUDY CONCLUDES THAT KIDS RELY UPON FRIENDS AND PERSONAL EXPERIENCE TO LEARN ABOUT SEX. MODERN SEX EDUCATION COURSES ARE A POOR SECOND AND PARENTS A DEAD LAST.

OUR SOCIETY HAS NEVER HAD THE COURAGE TO DEAL WITH SEX, SO THAT OUR KIDS HAVE BEEN LEFT IN THE DARK. THIS IS THE SECOND OF THREE ARTICLES THAT I HOPE WILL REVEAL TO YOU THE COST: WHAT KIDS ARE REALLY THINKING ABOUT SEX.

The students notes you read came from kids who knew I was bothered by the sex attitudes of both parents and children and the kids tried to "clue me in". The writers are unknown - nearly all of them even to me.

The notes usually come from students most bothered by their attitudes, so kids may appear more promiscuous than they really are. But it is also true that adults have little understanding of the youth sex culture.

First, we must realize how strongly a kid's self-confidence is tied to sex:

> "One thing that frustrates me is the fact that I don't have enough self-confidence. I mean when I'm with someone I really like I get all these horrible qualms about myself & then I end up hating myself. Sometimes I so envy the people who are so self assured it bugs me...I've never had any sex but sometimes I'm so damned curious that when a moment does come I think I'd probably fall prey to the temptations. I don't think I really have any resistance. I guess what I am saying is that I need help in my self-confidence & rather a little bit more on why society says sex is wrong between two unmarried people 'cause I believe it's kind of right."

As with this boy:

> "One problem I seem to have is that I am very insecure. I am always wondering what people think about me. Another fear I have is intercourse. I may say I would love to get in bed with so and so, but I'm really afraid to. I can't explain why."

Now think of that boy's doubts as you "hear" this girl:

> "I also learned about the sexual double standard. Boys that have sex with any girl they want are admired or at least not criticized. These same boys are dismayed when they see the same attitude in a girl. It is not acceptable for girls to be promiscuous. Another thing I found to be true is that the boys expect a girl to say no and are disarmed when a girl says an enthusiastic yes. I think the boy must bet on the girl's no because there probably is a certain sense of relief when he does not have to go through with the actual performance."

Can you see how much they could help each other by a frank talk about their true sex attitudes?

Another price of our failure to talk sex is ignorance:

> "Sex is very different for girls. This is because of the physical aspect. I always have to worry about pregnancy since I don't use any form of birth control. My mother told me I could have the pill, but I do not want it yet since I am still young - 17 - it would be foolish to start it now. The pill can be taken for only one year."

Parents who think their own morals will keep their kids in check should think about this note:

> "At that time I did not have the self-confidence to stand and therefore, I let myself be taken while convincing myself it had to be true love. Needless to say the guilt feelings built up not only that I was not going to be a virgin on my wedding day (and be able to wear white honestly) but I had compromised my true feelings.
>
> "Now I do not believe that sex is wrong. It's only wrong when a person is not ready for it. I have now going a lasting relationship and sex is not the most important thing to either of us. It is an extra special thing not to be abused but cherished. And wearing white on my wedding day isn't that important anymore because it was my mother's dream."

Finally, the most tragic part of our failure is our kid's ignorance of the real consequences of their actions. Consider:

> "...I was pregnant. I had no way of getting in touch with my boyfriend, so there I was stuck on the spot with a very hard decision to make. My doctor advised me to tell my parents, to

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The Courage To Grow
September 30, 1973

Two Girls Who Made Mistakes

This is the last of three articles on student attitudes towards sex.

Because of our lack of courage in dealing with our own sex attitudes, by default we have allowed our kids to learn from friends and personal experience. And friends no longer frown upon a girl who "sleeps" with a boy friend; to the contrary, there is often pressure on the girl that doesn't. Parents just don't realize this change in youth ethics, so they are as unaware now how much their kids are having sexual intercourse as they were when their kids first smoked "pot".

The first two articles tried to show the tragic cost of our failure. In this concluding article, I hope to show the vital role that parents and school could and should play in so helping kids.

Compare these two girls who made "a mistake" and what they learned after thru adult guidance or lack of it.

First, a girl "closed out" at home and too new to yet be helped by our school:

> "My attitude, I feel is a fairly commonly shared one by girls my age. If I feel that the relationship I'm having with my guy is a fairly secure one, and I feel secure with him, I'll have sex with him. I've been with a few boys in my time, my whole 16 years worth and I don't feel degraded now. At first I was confused about it all but then I got it fairly straightened out. I had long talks with adults, and eventually agreed that it does somewhat mess you up emotionally, more for the girl than the boy. I've had long talks with boys after having sex as well as before and how it affects the relationship, as well as how it affects their attitude towards me. In some cases I'm happy with the result, but more often than not I don't really feel too good about it.
>
> "It's not that I'm really extroverted when it comes to sex, but basicly, I enjoy it. I feel though that I should be treated with a fair amount of respect. The attitudes of some people is that because I have had sex with boys that I don't deserve any respect. I really can't distinguish between what's morally right and wrong. I feel that my parents have given me a basic comprehension, but sex has always been a tight subject in my house and not talked about freely at all. Maybe that's why I take the opposite look at things, in a basicly free way. But I feel that when I don't have sex for a while I find myself feeling better about myself.
>
> "I've had some unfortunate experiences with sex, and one rewarding one. Many times I feel myself fairly gullible about trusting people too soon and opening up too quickly only because, I've had that experience, and have been walked on, used, or abused, misused or whatever you'd like to call it. I basicly agree that it is my fault. I think I need help in this area, to build up some kind of strength and basic pride in myself. I almost feel, thinking back that I have no pride. No respect in myself. I want some. Badly. I feel like Hyde School is giving me some. I'll soon find out. Sex is basicly an important part of a relationship, and you just have to know how to handle it. Maybe I can begin to learn that here with a little help. It's not really as easy as all that. You just don't walk up to someone and say 'I need your help with sex!' They'd think you were crazy. Well, sometimes I feel like I can handle it myself, but then I get so distraught I don't know what to do.
>
> "I don't really like the way I used to be but I feel I've changed a little. I still need a little more confidence."

And now the story of a regular student who made her mistake while at Hyde; a mistake which was handled openly by both parents and the school. The girl consented to write her reactions for this column:

> "After having intercourse, the part that scared me the most was having to tell my parents. I knew they would have second thoughts about me, but above all else our trust bond would be broken. The thought of a pregnancy never entered my mind.
>
> "Before I had even considered making this step, a conversation with my parents led me to ask, 'What would you do if I was pregnant?' They paused and answered, 'It's a hard thing to answer. We would have to know the circumstances, and we would know from the talks

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Watergate and Lincoln's Legacy

Polls say three out of four people think our President isn't telling the truth, yet less than one out of four would consider impeachment. Some are sick of Watergate, saying we should turn to "more important things".

Just how were those people brought up? What "things" are more important than our country's integrity?

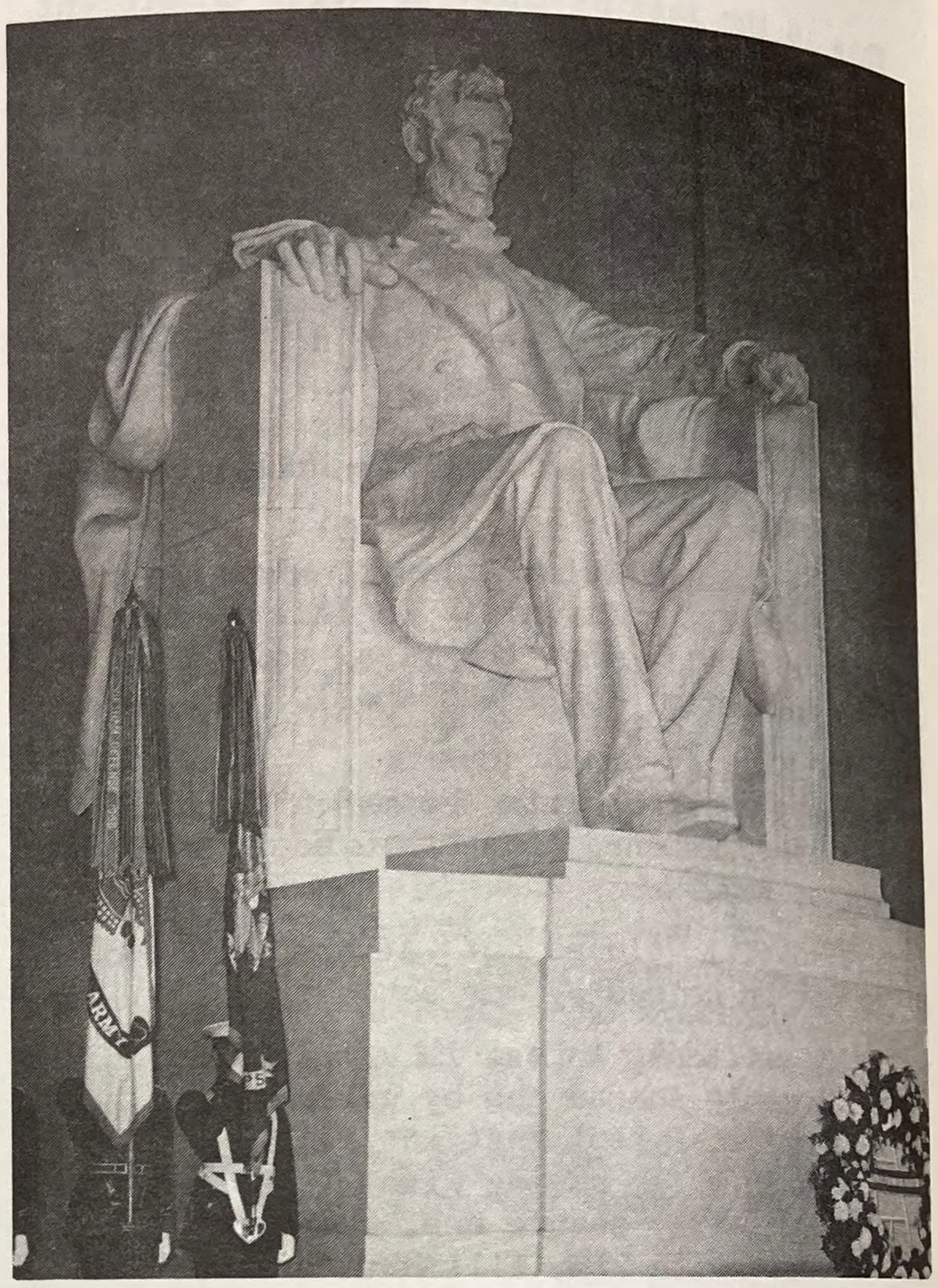
Webster's defines integrity: Uprightness of character, honesty, probity...I didn't know what probity meant, so I checked it: virtue or integrity tested and confirmed. I liked that: tested and confirmed. A young radical I heard described the feeling: when you bite into a real apple, the apple snaps back at you.

The Lincoln Memorial gave me that feeling of integrity the first time I went there as a little kid. The purity and solidness of that white marble. Looking up at that powerful figure of Lincoln sitting so upright, but with a slump in his shoulders as if tired from carrying extra weight. Were his sad all-knowing eyes looking down at me telling me some of that weight was mine?

I thought back to being six, in a tough section of Chicago. Some older kids talked me into stealing toys at the 5 and 10¢ store when I wasn't old enough to understand stealing. But when my stepfather discovered my thievery, he immediately marched me into the middle of the store and called out the manager. I then had to return the toys and with all the customers as witnesses, apologize, even though I couldn't get the words out because I was bawling so hard. My stepfather seemed unfair making me responsible for my actions at six. Were those penetrating eyes of Lincoln making me see now what I wouldn't see then? Yet his eyes refused to judge me.

Years later, we took our three kids to the Lincoln Memorial. I saw they were also affected, even Gigi, then 6. Myself, I had a lump in my throat so big it was painful. In the strange silence, pierced only by children's voices, the figure in the chair seemed so near and yet so distant. I remember resolving to be the kind of parent the weight on his shoulders expected me to be, but questioning whether I really had the stuff.

About that time, we became uncomfortable about some of Malcolm's friends. One day I looked out the window to see the police in a cruiser talking to two boys while Malcolm stood by. When I questioned Malcolm later, he paused, then blurted out that his friends had lied to the police over a neighborhood incident, but he hadn't known what to do. I simply told Malcolm by saying nothing he had lied to the police. With that, I immediately drove him to the police station to talk to the sargeant. When he came out, I knew by his face he had learned what I learned 40 years ago in that store.



I guess that's why I'm so impatient with people's tolerance of Watergate: Lincoln's statue helped me realize you are responsible for the people you associate with, responsible for what you don't say as well as what you say, and capable of understanding wrong involvement even at six.

But Lincoln's biggest lesson to me was yet to come.

Recently, Gigi, now 11, and I watched a movie on TV about Lincoln. A little girl had written President Lincoln to tell him his face was so sad he ought to wear a beard. The President visits the little girl unexpectedly and asks: "How do I look?" The maid is stunned, but the little girl simply offers the President imaginary tea, then they both sit down for a "serious" chit-chat.

Gigi's eyes were riveted on this touching scene and there was something unusual in her attention. At the end of it, she said almost unconsciously, "I wish President Nixon was like that."

Her words hit me like a ton of bricks and made me wonder: Are we missing a larger truth in Watergate? Lincoln once said: "A man is responsible for his own face after 40." Is that why that little girl understood the sadness in Lincoln's face? And is there some-

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The Courage To Grow
October 14, 1973

A School Faces Its Watergate

Let's be honest. We resist cleaning house on Watergate for fear the whole truth might cripple us both internally and abroad.

I don't fear the truth, for I believe every society must some day face a Watergate that pits its real values against its system of operation; a test of what the society ought to be versus what it is.

Hyde's Watergate came in the spring of 1970. We seemed at the peak of success. All Seniors had been accepted to college, most to firt choices. A coming evaluation might make us the first school ever to receive full accreditation in just its fourth year.

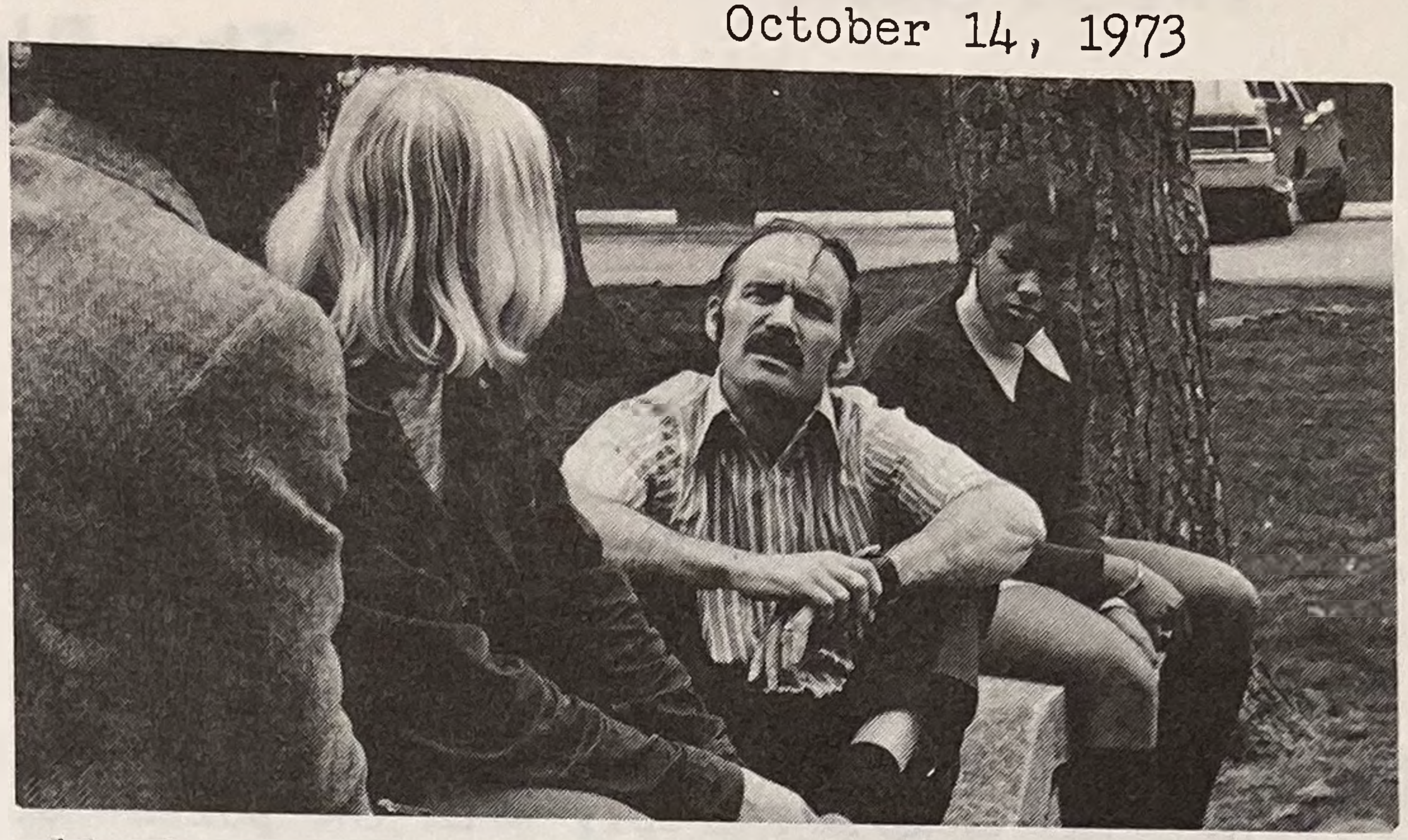
And we finally had made our honor system work. Students had readily enforced rules on lying, cheating and stealing, but shied from turning in a friend for smoking, drinking or drugs. But we had finally passed this hurdle. Or so we thought.

I "sniffed" something was wrong. Talking to students convinced me enough to address the school: "There are signs our honor system has been compromised. You may fear for the school and for your careers, but Hyde has faced many crises and grown from each one by having the courage to bet on the truth. Trust us. I can't promise any consequences, but some day you will not be sorry."

The kids accepted this advice. And did they! When the dust cleared four days later, almost half the school had either smoked, drank or smoked dope, the worst offender being the Head of the honor system himself. All but 15 of the remainder had known of violations, but failed to report them.

It was a tough time. Confidence was shattered; teachers felt betrayed by the students. A split developed even in the faculty; half counselled wholesale expulsions to save the school's honor, the other half wanted mercy since students honestly asked for and needed our help. Two teachers even came to me to question the integrity of the faculty, wondering if several teachers had earlier condoned violations.

The conflict even hit my own home. The faculty had split on accepting the resignation from school by the Head of the honor council. Was the boy basically responsible for the "Watergate" or would he be just a scapegoat? I left that night telling the faculty I would decide and announce my decision the next morning at 8:00. I thought I was going to keep the boy. He needed our help and while his failure had opened the "flood gates", I believed the system really at fault. My wife disagreed and we fought that night and early the next morning. At 7:30 a.m. I realized if I could not convince my wife, I might be rationalizing since I really wanted to keep the boy. I found the deeper truth in that last 30 minutes and accepted the boy's resignation. Today I realize how tragically both boy and school would have been hurt if we all had not fought through to that decision.



The faculty spent an entire week meeting with each and every student, finding out the extent of compromise and setting terms of restitution. Accreditation now seemed out of the question. So I went to enlist the evaluators help, laying out the extent of our problem. We called parents to the school to gain their involvement. Slowly justice began to right the ship.

The lessons were deep. Students realized the faculty had truly trusted them. They were used to schools that said "no smoking", but instructed janitors to sweep out butts in the bathrooms between periods. The faculty learned how much the kids really needed their help; and parents, the need to handle family problems openly. The evaluators helped us understand that our very failure was a real sign of success:

> "The committee had a notable opportunity to assess the spirit of Hyde School. A week before our visit the honor code was violated; as a result of this incident several students were withdrawn. The entire school community was deeply shocked by the experience, and much soul-searching was going on to determine what course should be taken: to reinstate the honor system or to replace it. The genuine concern on the part of the Student Council, with which the committee met, seems to assure a thoughtful solution in keeping with the spirit of the school. The attitude of these young leaders toward the whole unfortunate affair is proof that the Hyde system works; evident are real growth in character and the realization that there is room for further growth."

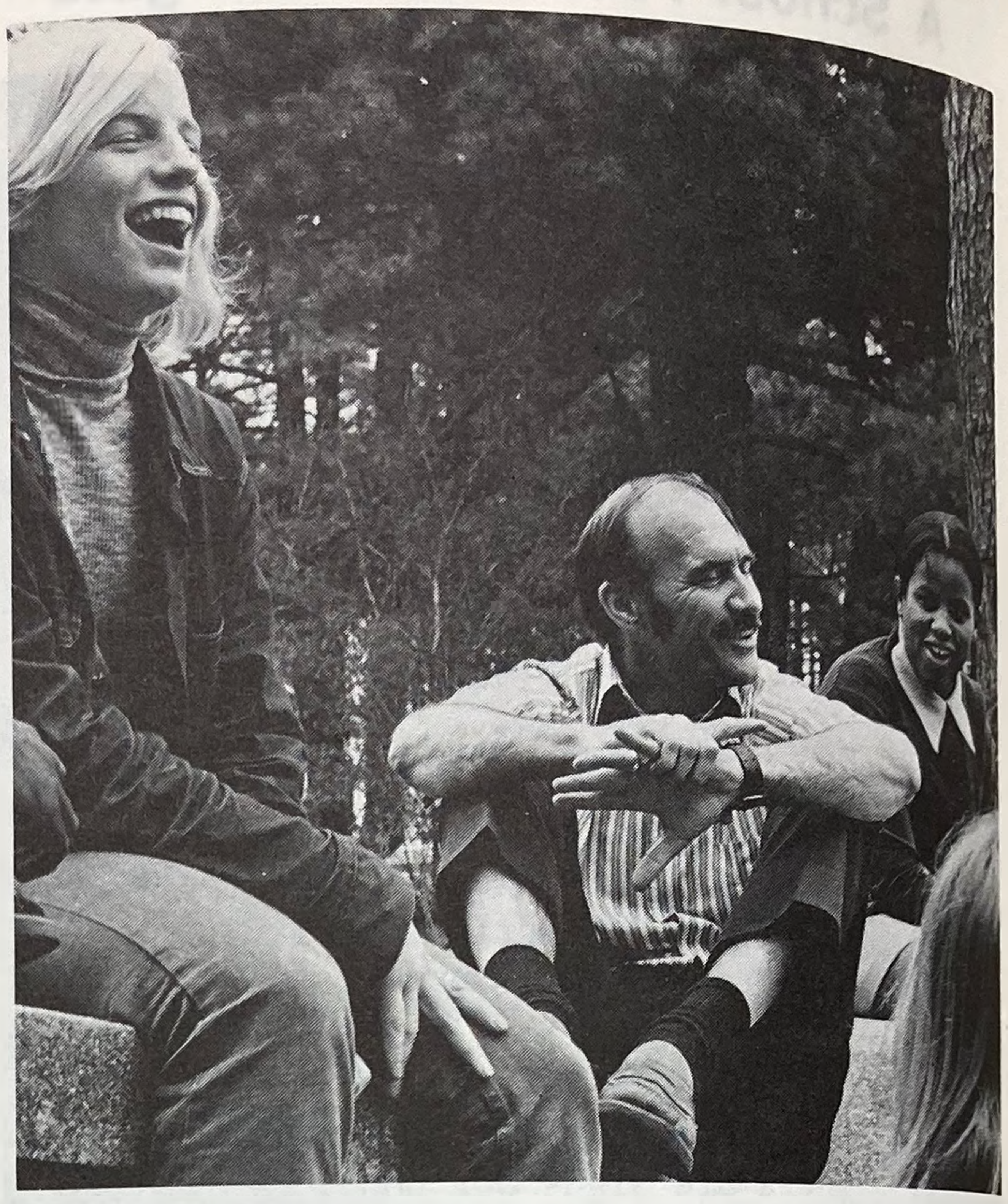
Today we don't have an honor system, yet both students and faculty agree smoking, drinking and drugs have no place at Hyde. The school needed the honor system's failure to find the more important bond: trust.

> "Society is built on trust, and trust upon confidence in one another's integrity."

Good words to remember in these days of Watergate.

The Courage To Grow
October 21, 1973

The Black "I-Q".



Are blacks and whites really equal?

It's hard to write a column on a subject that has been a battlefield for two hundred years. But it's time to stop fighting and have the courage to deal with the truth. I say there are definite inequalities on both sides, but blacks and whites need each other to complement their strengths.

My judgment is based upon experience. In my lifetime I have worked deeply with the potential of 5,000 kids to have confidence in what I have found: whites more developed in some intellectual areas, particularly academics; and blacks more developed in some physical and emotional areas, particularly in understanding people.

This should be clear even to the people fighting on the battleground. The "Northern Liberal", out to prove equality, is determined to show that blacks will perform exactly like whites given the opportunity. Yet with this approach, why does he make very little dent in the subpar academic achievement of predominately black schools?

The "Southern Hardnose" insists that he knows blacks are inferior because he has lived with them. Yet, in spite of his efforts to segregate, why do blacks taken into such white homes keep becoming an integral part of their families?

I think I understand why. My family lived in Washington, D. C. in the 30's. The depression afforded us a black maid who would become part of our family. Victoria was my favorite. Victoria may have had to ride in the back of the bus outside the home, but she "drove the bus" in our house. I still see her pushing my mother aside when a handyman tried to overcharge mother for yard work, saying: "Listen, Nigger, who you think you messin' with? You ain't tellin' Miz Gauld how much you get 'cause you ain't done nothin' yet." That ended the discussion. The handyman meekly accepted the money Victoria decided to give him (one black may call another "nigger", but my brother Tom got mad at Victoria once and learned the hard way its "no-no" for whites.).

Later, when Victoria's sister, Stella, came for help, unwed and pregnant for the second time, Victoria refused. Mother took Stella in over Victoria's objections: "Miz Gauld, that gal ain't never gonna learn if she don't pay. Ah cain't stop you, but I ain't liftin' a finger to help." The baby came sooner than expected, but Victoria remained true to her words. Mother and the cab driver ended up delivering the baby in the cab on the way to the hospital.

As I grew older, I realized Victoria fit into our family because she was often the most emotionally mature person in the house.

So before we worry about why blacks don't seem to hold their own in intellectual fields like science and medicine, we have cause to consider the domination of the black in fields of expression like music and sports. Before we assume that the world measures the greatness of the American society by its scientific developments, let us remember that some universal American legends have names like Jessie Owens and Louie Armstrong.

Recently a "rhubarb" was caused by studies that the black "I.Q." is inferior to white. Beyond the fact that experience has taught me I.Q." only partially deals with true intelligence, why should the black man have the same "I.Q." as a white? Was the kind of intelligence man needed to cope with Africa for the past 2,000 years the same needed by our white ancestors in Europe? Satchell Paige may not have the "I.Q." required to be a professor or an engineer, but he managed to pitch a baseball better and about 30 years longer than any white man with the following philosophy:

"Avoid fried meats which angry up the blood.

"If your stomach disputes you, lie down and pacify it with cool thoughts.

"Keep the juices flowing by jangling around gently as you move.

"Go very light on the vices, such as carrying on in society--the social ramble ain't restful.

"Avoid running at all times.

"And don't look back. Something might be gaining on you."

That flunks for "I.Q,", but passes for "soul". Maybe a Satchell Einstein could not only have put a man on the moon, but could also have anticipated the problems that led to pollution as well!

October 28, 1973

The Harlem Connection

Last week I said that while whites tend to be more academically developed, blacks tend to better understand people.

Like Jim Grasty, a black from Harlem. I usually don't use real names in my column, but I want you to remember Jim. Some day his understanding will do much to help blacks and whites come together.

Jim came to summer school with reservations. He had left two other summer schools the first week because of homesickness. He tried the same thing at Hyde but this time I stopped him. After a "man to man" talk failed, I brushed aside his "lofty" reasons for leaving with sarcasm and a lecture about "guts". He wasn't used to it.

"Man, are you calling me plastic?"

"Jimmy, I've heard all the 'reasons', it still adds up to a quitter." Next, I cut off his escape route by bolstering up his parents, a very strong influence in Jimmy's life. Ghetto families that are able to stay together are some of the best. "If Jimmy is ever going to find his best, you must demand he stay and face up to things." I also had some help from Barry, a white student counselor, who got to know Jim by playing him "one on one" in basketball. Barry had resigned from Hyde the year before and didn't want Jim to make the same mistake. I managed to keep him at school, although our eyes seldom met and Jimmy's pet name for me in the dormitory was "warden".

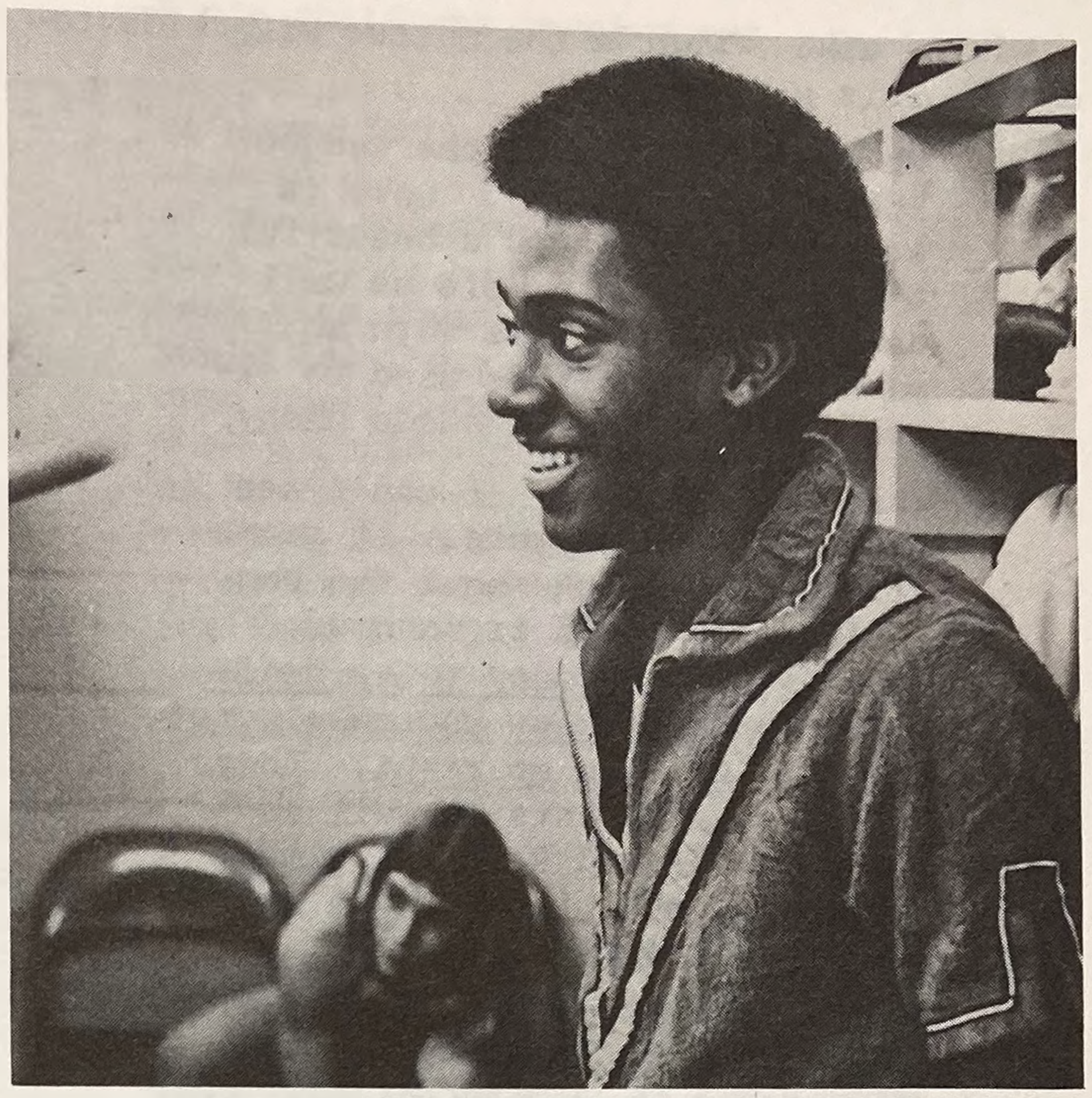
But Jim gradually began to accept both Hyde and me. Later he even came to me when he was upset by overtones of racial prejudice in school. After investigating, I found the source to be Mark, a Southerner, so I called both Mark and Jimmy into my office for a conference.

"You both must realize that your feelings towards each other are not of your doing. I was brought up in a segregated Washington, D.C. and was shocked to find a black in my high school when we moved up north. But I knew my prejudice was wrong, and making black friends helped me face myself."

I heard nothing more until a year later. Almost by accident, Jimmy told me he had invited Mark to visit him in Harlem after school let out.

"Mr. Gauld, people think Harlem is just all drugs and muggings and I wanted Mark to see it as a place of real families."

Jimmy told how Mark had planned to spend only two days, but stayed a week, with only one anxious moment: "I did some errands and when I came home Mark was gone. My sister said Bobby - a friend - took him somewhere. I nearly panicked, imagining Bobby, a militant Black Panther, with a prejudiced Southerner. I rushed out to the neighborhood, but found them talking away, practically arm in arm."



When Jimmy became a Senior, Barry called me from college: "I got thinking, Mr. Gauld. I'm making money on my job, so I want to help Jimmy go to college. I know there's something important in that kid." I was able to tell Barry that Jimmy had been accepted to Brown on full scholarship. Barry was so choked up, his "that's incredible" was barely audible.

When I told Jimmy what Barry had tried to do, he broke down and cried. The depth of their relationship became even more obvious to me later. A teacher recalled Barry's shortcomings in Jimmy's presence and brought fire to Jimmy's eyes as he came to Barry's defense. It reminded me of the only time I "lit into" my grandmother - she had unfairly criticized my brother, Tom.

Jimmy graduated last June and his classmates and teachers voted him the Hyde Award for outstanding development of courage, integrity, concern for others, curiosity and leadership. To quote the last of his Commencement speech:

> "This year has unquestionably been an exhilarating one for me, as the relationships I've made and the experiences I've encountered have all contributed greatly to my future. My life will never be an easy one, nor will it ever be the same because of the commitments I've taken on. My attachments to family, friends, race, and country are all very deep and probably in that order, and all are a form of incentive. However, that which has been most inspiring to me and that which I am most thankful for has been the goodness and sincer-

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Kids On Love, Sex And Parents

Adults ask: "What's the matter with kids today?" This girl answers:

> "Whenever I think of the subject love, I want to cry. Love is supposed to be such a beautiful thing and young people as well as adults abuse this word so much that when it is used to express a feeling it sounds phony.
>
> "What is real love? I can't use the word love anymore. It seems strange. I think about the condition this world is in now. Parents are supposed to be dedicated to their kids and make sure they are growing up right. There are problem parents as well as problem kids and a lot of times its the parents fault why a kid goes down a drain.
>
> "When I was living with my parents, there was a house full of kids, an alcoholic father who always drank up the money and wouldn't come home, and a mother who always ran to her mothers house while leaving us at home. We had no food, no clothing, and the most important thing that we didn't have was love. After a while things got worse and we all got split up and sent to a home. Do you know how we all got put there? My mother told us that we were going on a picnic and the next thing we knew we ended up in a home. Is that real love?
>
> "Parents are babying their kids, giving them anything, and for what? Parents are some of the worst abusers. They are supposed to be examples for the younger generation and they push and sell drugs and drink excessively. Believe me, this isn't something that I heard but have actual knowledge of.
>
> "Mr. Gauld, I haven't had the chance to read all of your articles and the ones I have read have been about problem kids. Have you written anything on problem parents?"

Perhaps you think such uncommitted parents are just in slums. But I find "respectable" homes today that are even letting kids down worse. Such parents either try to buy affection by never saying "no" or sweep their children's problems under the rug to maintain a successful image in the community. They so promote their "fine children who have no problems" that kids are afraid telling the real truth will let them down.

Consider the scars a "closed" home helped make on this sensitive, but unguided girl:

> "When I was 14 years old I was seeing a boy steadily. We continued to date all the next year - I became 15, he was 16. As we became closer and more intimate we shared many things, one of which was sexual intercourse. This became a habit, a 'thing to do'. In a way it was an expression of immature love. Our love was a feeling of mutual warmth, an exchange of ideas, affection, friendship. Our sexual relations were exploratory; we were finding out about sex; about each other. The thought never really impressed us that sexual intercourse led to pregnancy or venereal disease. Eight months after the beginning of our sexual intimacy I became pregnant. Various 'solutions' were evident: I could kill myself, tell my parents and have them put me in a home for unwed mothers (which would traumatize my mother), or have an illegal abortion. I knew I could never really kill myself, I could not bring myself to tell my parents, so I had an illegal abortion with money which I borrowed from my brother. It was strictly confidential. The abortion itself was a rather harrowing experience, psychologically. I felt that, although I was being totally unrealistic, I wanted to keep the child. I wanted to have that baby, to love it, to watch it grow. I realized that the baby would not be a doll, an adorable toy to play with all my life so the only escape was to have all life scraped and sucked out of my uterus. Afterwards, I was overcome with guilt that I had murdered my child - if left untouched he could have been a living, breathing individual, a creative thinking person. I am still haunted by the deep lasting guilt even now."

But suppose she had told her parents like this girl:

> "A few summers ago I got into trouble - I became pregnant. After a lot of thinking and talking to other people I came to the conclusion that having an abortion was best. Right after I had the abortion I was very relieved and

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The Courage To Grow
November 11, 1973

Kids Talk About Drugs

The other day one school proudly announced it has only had one case involving drugs in six years.

It's time we grew out of this utterly false idea that not having the problems everyone else has makes us better teachers or parents. Such statements stop kids from getting help with their real problems. They feel bursting our bubbles will let us down further, leaving them with a great sense of guilt for duping us. A typical example:

> "For years I've lied to my parents about taking drugs. I thought my father would call the police and just have an overall hassle. Recently I thought about telling them but I don't know if I would be doing them wrong. I've gotten to the point in lying that they think I'm dead set against drugs. I feel it would be a shock if they knew now but I don't feel good about not being honest. This sounds stupid but I enjoy some drugs and I don't really care what drugs do to me.
>
> "My mother is more liberal than my father, but I think telling her could be worse. Women are emotional. I don't want anyone to think the problem is them. It's my choice, I made it and I'll live (and die) with it."

Then when kids care enough to level, few parents struggle to understand. So kids don't respect their judgment:

> "Recently I was having a very heated and consequently open discussion with my parents. I told them I have taken LSD. They were upset but not in a way that was understanding. They shook their heads and looked at the ground as though I had thrown my life away.
>
> "Parents that I know, usually base their ideas about drugs upon what they read, what they see on TV, and hearsay. Unfortunately, what they usually read is from one point of view. Just about the only articles in the newspapers concerning drugs are of people who have overdosed or died from them. The same goes for most brochures, etc. They speak only of what may happen but not of what may not. Therefore, they think that if a child (maybe their own) takes a drug, he probably will become addicted and lose his sanity. God knows how many youths take or have taken drugs and their parents haven't a notion of their childrens involvement in it.
>
> "It seems to me that the problem lies in the parents understanding of their children's curiosity. Most parents haven't got the closeness with their children that would let their kids rely totally upon their judgment. Therefore when a child rejects their ideas of how drugs can physically or mentally harm them, they don't understand. Can't parents realize that it's out of curiosity and a rejection of their judgment, that their kids take drugs?"

Parents must understand the pressures from peers to do drugs is intense. Few kids have this one's strength:

> "I know something of the pressures to smoke pot. It is a miserable situation to be in when everybody in a room is smoking up and you're not. This has happened to me a few times and I get very upset, emotionally. I feel like an oddball. I'm pretty sensitive to feelings and usually I can tell that those people don't respect me for my decision. The pressure gets really bad and I find I want to smoke it, do anything so they won't reject me, but respect and like me. So far, when this has happened I have still said no; something inside of me says no. But how strong that feeling inside of me is I don't know."

Or this kid's:

> "I live in the guts of New York. I'm living in an environment of drugs. My friends take it for fun or for to join the group.
>
> "I go to parties and dances with this around. I have been offered some and the guy to put me down low, they take it or smoke right under my nose, but I know if I smoke cigarettes, drink, smoke pot or shoot up, I'll feel this guilt in myself so much that there's no where to hide from my parents or from my guilt. I believe this guilt would stay for the rest of my life."

Most parents only learn the extent of a kid's drug use when he gets in serious trouble. And serious trouble is often simply availability.

> "My experience started at the beginning of 7th grade and did not stop until the last term of 10th. That was close to four years of continual

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The Courage To Grow
November 18, 1973

Kids and Pot

Why do kids smoke "pot"?

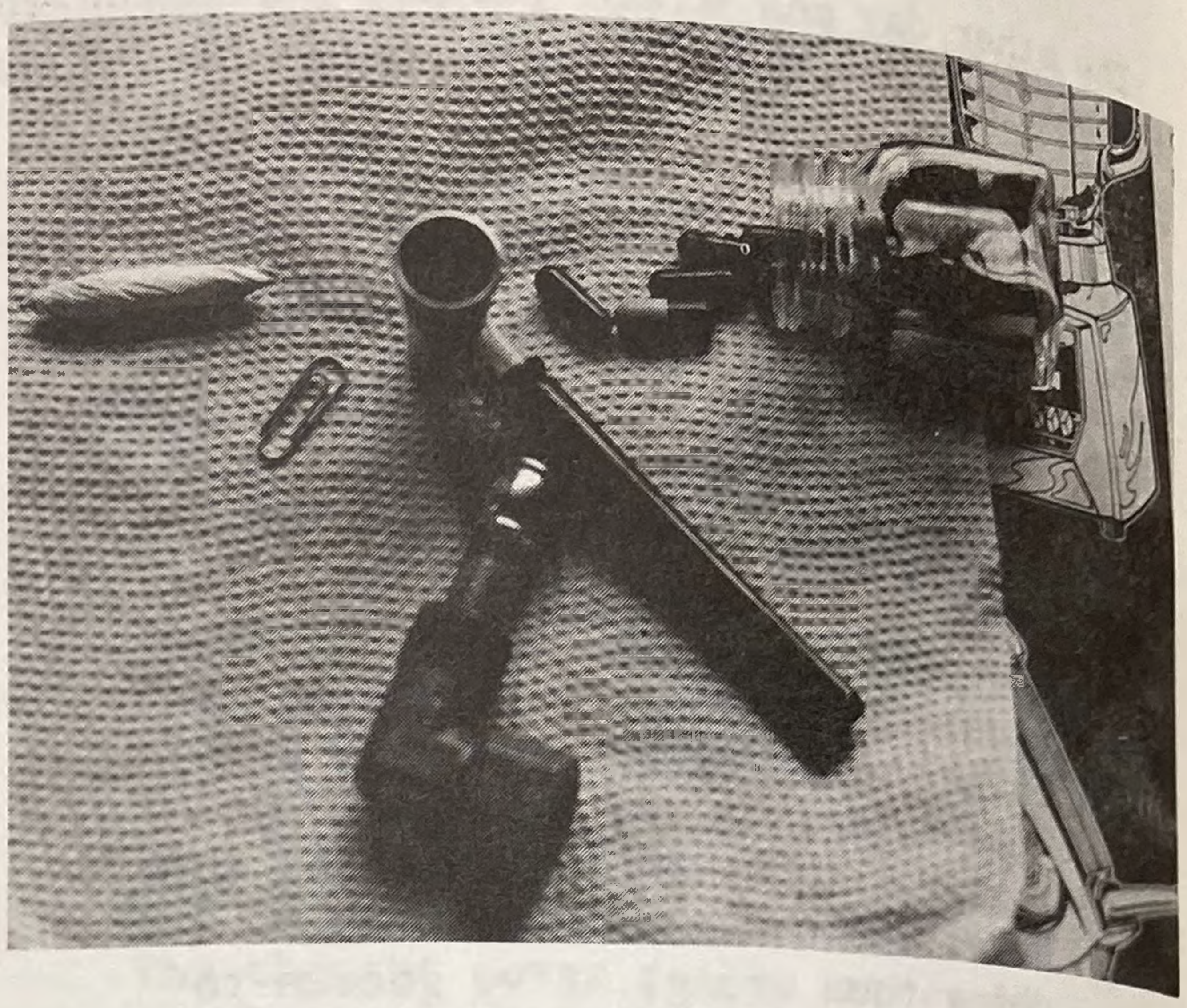
> "Dear Mr. Gauld: I'm getting sick of the way you always treat 'pot'. I don't think you know that much on it. First of all, you never tried it so you don't know what it's like. If you never tried it, then I think you should just be quiet about it. I did a term paper about it, so I did a lot of research. In fact, what I found out was surprising. Seems like scientists don't think it's really that bad. They say that alcohol is worse. So until you try it, don't knock it."

Those scientists don't understand the problem of "growing up". A kid can escape his problems on pot with just fifty cents, even between periods at school and feel no bad after effects. At least booze costs more, takes longer and can bring an "Oh, God, I'll never drink again" the next morning. But my bias against pot comes from what students really feel - not often expressed to friends.

Consider:

> "I have used drugs for about 1½ years. Mostly grass but sometimes stronger. I never really gave drugs much thought. I turned on about three times a day and really loved it. We would have contests to see who could get the most stoned. About the middle of last year I started going down. I was getting sicker and sicker. I wanted a better high but could not find it. I thought tranqs would be good, but blah.
>
> "By the end of school last year I would drink and smoke as much dope as possible.
>
> "I see now what dope was to me, an escape. If the straight life wasn't good, the dope one was. I needed the dope cause I would be in trouble because of the day before when I was high. It was a hard cycle to break, but I'm glad I did and when I look back and see all the other kids in it, I know that there really is a dope problem."

Or:



> "One of the greatest challenges I've had at Hyde has been to keep straight. When I came to Hyde and had to quit dope, I was forced to realize that I was mentally addicted to pot.
>
> "You see, I am what is known as a pothead. The only form of drugs I use is pot. The only other dope I have ever done is downs and mescaline. The main reason I don't get into anything stronger is because I know I would love acid, speed and junk so much I just wouldn't be able to become unhooked.
>
> "I believe that everyone has a crutch in life - no matter how strong they are. Some have the courage to fight it. My crutch is pot. It is the root of what keeps me from growing at Hyde. I have yet to find the complete courage to fight it - in other words - to forget my 'pot' life and commit myself to Hyde and grow. It's only one step and I would be on my way. I guess everyone wonders why I don't take that step.
>
> "They don't know what I feel like when I'm stoned. I'm totally relaxed, sociable, contented and always in a partying mood. I love everything when I'm stoned. I get into whatever happens to be around me. Thanks to pot, this earth is the most beautiful piece of art ever produced in my eyes. I can never stop marvelling at it.
>
> "But I realize that my 'stoned happiness' is a false happiness."

Or:

> "I've been smoking pot for a good three years. When I first started, it was a complete euphoria. I loved it. Afterwards I'd feel tired and kind of emotionally drained. Then after a while it was like nothing - it was natural. My eyes would be just as red but I was so used to it that I didn't even get off. But something can't be fantastic everyday of your life. After

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The Courage To Grow
November 25, 1973

Did Colleges Learn Anything From 60's

The other day a college administrator told me that because of faculty pressure, they were going to go for more "bright" kids in the future. He hastened to add that since they had so many more candidates, they could still get those "good" kids, too.

I was sick to my stomach as I hung up the phone. I had thought better colleges understood the student revolt in the 60s signalled a deeper problem - like those who must have recognized the sickening danger of that "thud" aboard the Titanic. I thought colleges were getting away from the tyranny of IQ and College Board scores and the fallacy of equating such numbers with "brightness". I thought colleges would try to broaden the recognition of human excellence in admissions and radically alter the college curriculum.

Such a change is desperately needed by our country. I have discovered this emphasis on academic excellence actually has a negative effect upon the character growth of kids. This statement is so shocking I knew I needed time to prove it. So I had been reassured colleges were headed away from this harmful emphasis anyway.

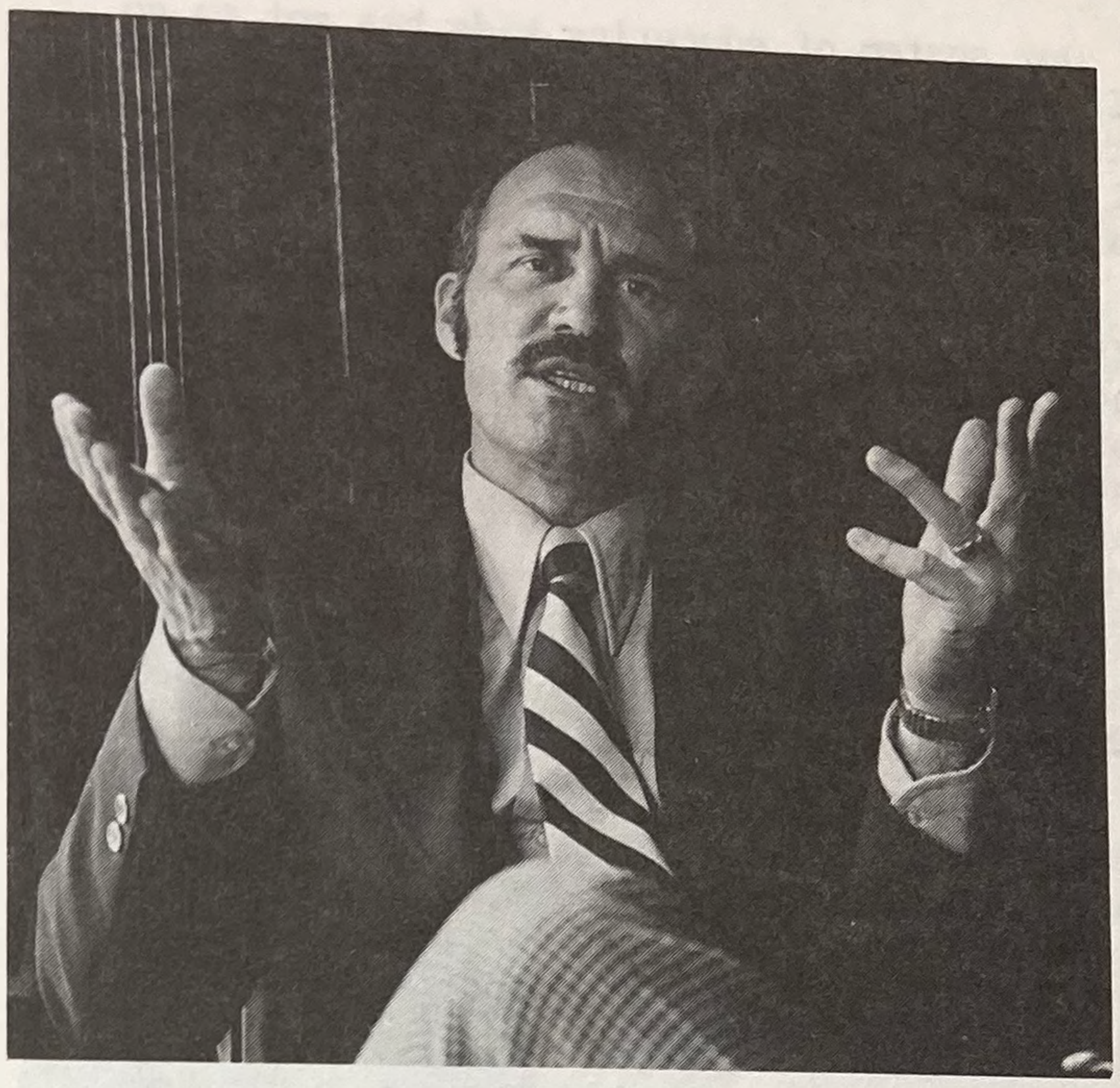
But now campuses have quieted down and colleges appear returning to the "good old days". Like those on the Titanic returning to the dance floor after the "thud", reassured by some Junior officer's smile.

Do I seem overly dramatic? Well, certainly we relied upon that kind of college education to develop our leaders. Few politicians, professionals, or executives weren't awarded one of its diplomas. Even Plato said: "The direction in which education starts a man will determine his future life."

So where has that leadership taken us? Yes, our society has done some exciting and glamorous things - like putting a man on the moon. But when I first began coaching, I developed an exciting and glamorous basketball team. The highest scoring team in the state; however, we lost as many games as we won. Looking back, it was the worst coaching job of my career.

So whatever our glories, we're also stuck with losses of crime, pollution, inflation, cynicism and spirit in our people. Watergate is proof enough our country got the poorest coaching job of its history. And these coaches were some of our "brightest" and most successful college products.

I put the blame squarely on that system of education. Not only has it proven unsuccessful, it is further unequal and unAmerican. What that administrator and his college faculty mean by "bright" can't really be developed - you are born with it. Not only is this ability only partially related to true intelligence, it's a quality harder to find in kids whose parents come from offbeat environments like a ghetto or a farm.



Our forefathers came here from ghettos and farms in Europe because they didn't buy that not being born with the right kind of "blood" in their veins made a difference.

They declared their independence from King George and his aristocracy of "blood" and left that legacy to future sons. They told us that God had endowed every single one of us with certain unalienable rights; that if there ever came a time an institution didn't respect those rights, we not only have the right to overthrow, we indeed had the obligation to do so.

You know, many of us were so appalled by student radicals burning down buildings, we saw them as enemies of our country. Considering the aristocracy of "bright" in school, we better rethink our positions. Maybe we're unknowingly on the side of King George fighting the sons of our forefathers.

It was this unequal, unAmerican, and worse, unsuccessful "bright" education that led to my commitment in 1963 to find a better way to help our kids prepare for life. I bet on a quality that was a sure winner: character. Courage, integrity, concern for others, curiosity and leadership. Qualities that built a great country.

These qualities probably wouldn't have gotten us to the moon or achieved other exotic deeds, but then maybe they wouldn't have given us our problems in alienation and loss of human dignity and spirit either. One thing is for sure: if we could have mixed just a little bit of that character in some of those "bright" leaders, we never would have had Watergate.

The Courage To Grow
December 2, 1973

Time To Flunk Some Sacred Cows

Our system of educating kids has got to go. It has become obsolete; a bottleneck to a kid's true growth. It underminds hardworking teachers. I may sound harsh, but we really have a serious situation on our hands.

The problem can't be blamed on spoiled kids. Kids are customers who not only don't want our educational product; they react to it by dropping out, running away, escaping through drugs, stealing, lying, vandalizing and God knows what else. Even ones still buying are often apathetic and spiritless.

No, when customer response is that bad, you can't just doctor the stew. It's time for a change.

The first sacred cow we need to shoot is that academics is the key to excellence. Yes, it's good to discipline a kid's mind and keep him busy at night with a little homework, but my God, is his mind the only important mechanism the Creator gave him?

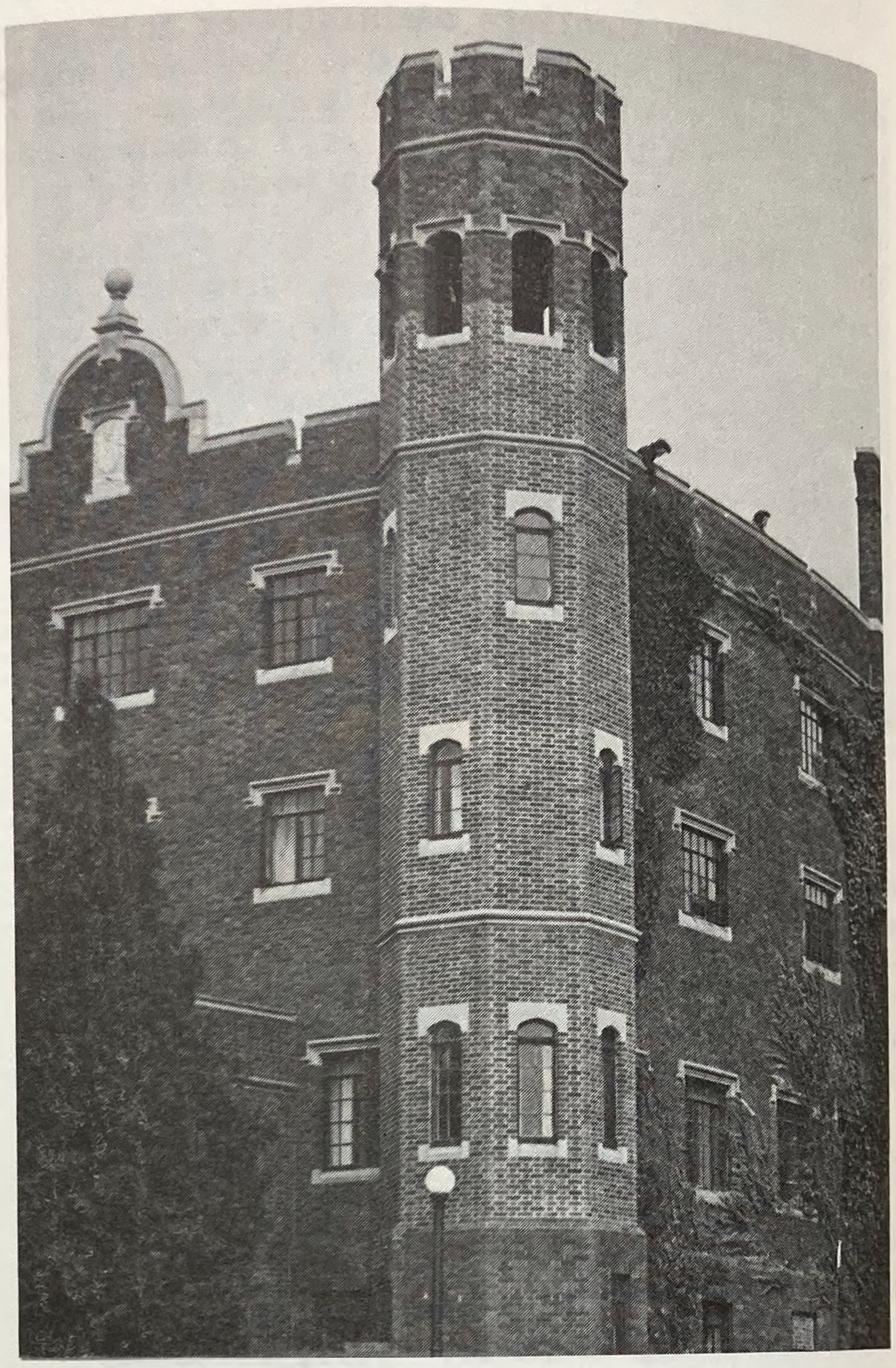
Schools can be read like a 1984 script. Kids sorted by ability even in the first grade. Then countless ability tests begin and all that jargon: abstract reasoning is this, verbal ability to computational skills is 2.3 under that, so feed the data to the machine; it says tilt, stamps the kid dyslexic, something worse than cancer.

Tests arrange kids so well by high school, dumb ones are given reassuring smiles and busy work, then schools really go to town "fattening up" the smart ones. Finally, a super-test (if you've never seen where they make these tests in Princeton, the place will probably soon annex New Jersey just to keep up) places the kids into colleges for smarts and sorta-smarts, making sure the super-smarts born with extra brain cells get their name in the paper and go to college free.

Now in college, smart-smarts make up the faculty and since students are so smart and don't need help, teachers can spend their time researching what the super-smarts have done before them. This accelerates knowledge which is how we've doubled all previous knowledge in chemistry in just eight years. So smarter kids get smarter, which will make extra super-smart teachers, who will then double chemistry in just four years.

Don't worry where all this is leading, we'll be so smart when we get there we'll understand the purpose. Probably soon. Then we'll know the sacrifice of our humanity in the process was worth it.

Maybe that's the answer. We're smart enough now to develop computers to do our work. They say some day computers without bothersome human error will even make man's abilities obsolete. Then I suppose, since we've developed something superior to the creation of man, we can declare our Creator obsolete.



I apologize for letting sarcasm run away with me, but we must stop kidding ourselves. We certainly aren't fooling the kids. As one 14 year old wrote:

> "In seventh grade we had a smart group. The teachers denied this, but to all of us students it was so obvious it wasn't funny. Another girl and I had been in the 'dumb' group at the beginning of the year. However, we started improving and it was showing up in our work. We were pulled into the office and told we were being switched to the other group. They explained to us that this group was not smarter, just stressing different parts of English. I said to myself, 'They must know what they are talking about', but I got too many jealous feelings from the other girls in the dumb group to know that I was wrong. It was the same with the smarter group. They knew they were smarter and they acted like it. Many times I told myself to believe, but it was so ridiculous I couldn't."

This is why kids are so alienated and not

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December 9, 1973

An Open Letter To The Netherlands

Dear Netherlands:

You made me proud today. You faced the Arabian oil blackmail - this supreme cynical insult to the human spirit that man is more interested in his gut than his soul - and you stood fast.

No, I am not Dutch. I'm proud because I am a Headmaster of a community that includes 145 kids; kids who today need live heroes, not just the Lincolns and the Churchills of yesterday. So in a hero-less age, too often motivated by self-interest, you are giving inspiration that at least one government of men is concerned with the future spirit of children.

I grew up to newsreels that pictured a Nazi octupus spreading over the map of Europe. As kids, we learned this terrible monster was to be feared and resisted. But then we became confused by the newsreel showing a free world leader with a black umbrella smiling and shaking hands with the evil man of the mustache. Why did the talk of blackmail now turn into "peace in our time"? Why didn't we fight this dictator who swallowed up countries and put people in ovens?

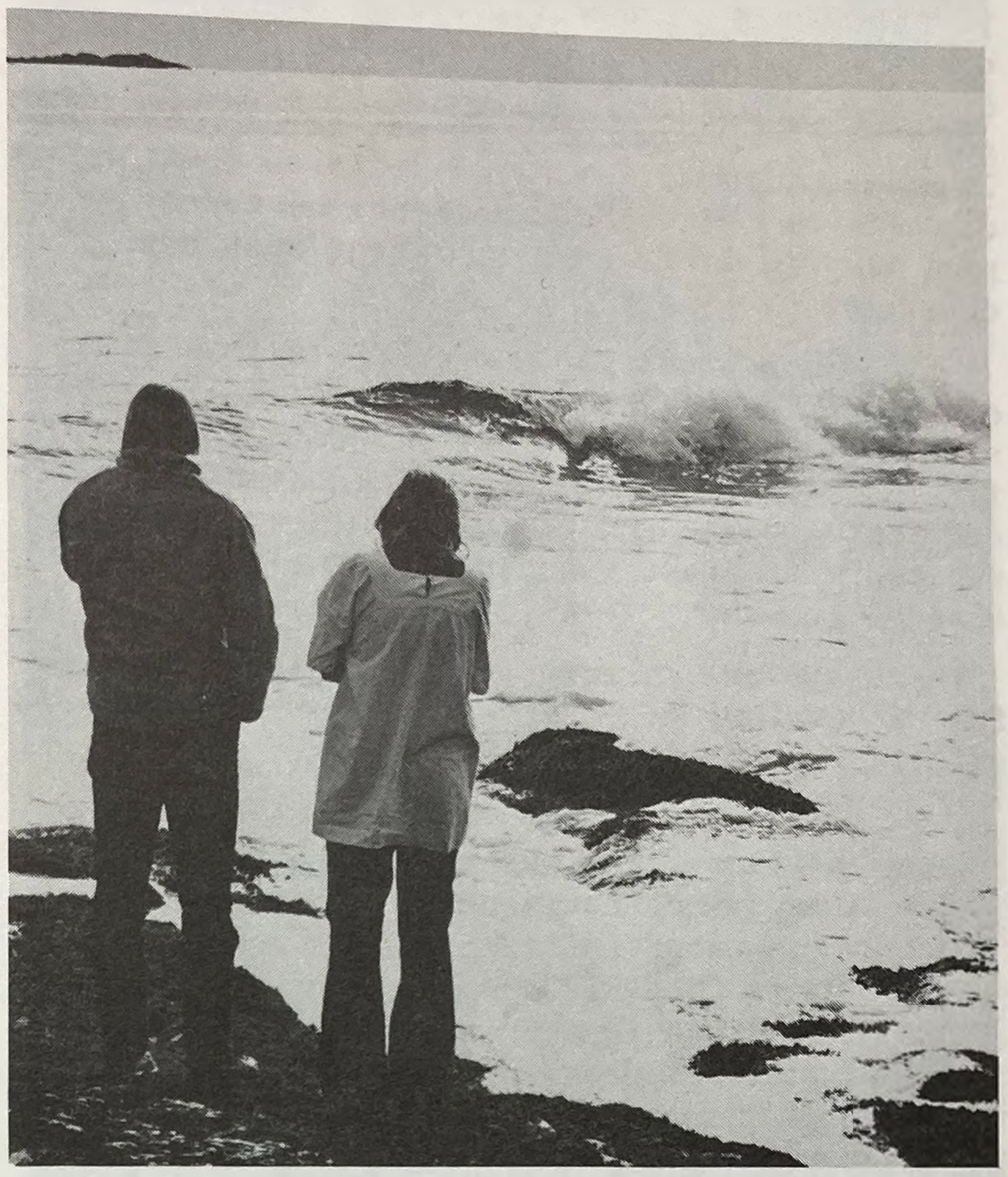
Then I grew up to understand. Painfully the "grownups" also grew up to understand that you can't do business with a blackmailer. Or so I thought. We had failed to act on principle 30 odd years ago and it had cost 5,000,000 Jews their lives.

Surely, I told my students, we would never let these people down again. But then my worst fears were painfully realized when the Israeli-Arab war broke out again. Facing the oil embargo, governments fell like dominoes, dutifully escaping the Arabian definition of "bad" attitude by condemning the Israelis. These were the same European countries that watched Jewish neighbors get ripped from their homes by the Nazis. In that case, at least, principle was gambled to save lives. But how do I explain such a compromise to kids today when the stakes are simply keeping people warm and economies stable?

Then word came that Holland was holding fast! But in this dark moment, was this ray of hope real? Perhaps Holland had a Jewish power block. Then I found out that Holland lost 100,000 Jews in the war and today have only 20,000 in a population of 13,000,000. So why?

Then I remembered that Holland was the home of Anne Frank. Hitler couldn't kill the spirit of that one little girl, and that human spirit wiped out the entire Nazi influence from the face of Europe.

I learned that the Dutch reflect that spirit; tens of thousands of them visit her little attic every year. Polls indicate 8 out of 10 support the Israelis.



It seems the Dutch have other commitments too. They very quietly have made homes for the kids scarred by the war in Ireland; kids from both the Catholic and Protestant sides. Not only have these kids gained a better understanding of each other, but they return to Ireland with the confidence of knowing someone cares.

I learned other interesting things about the Dutch; like how they mix their homes for the aged with homes for orphans. It seems this relationship has not only given older people a purpose which results in longer lives, but it also turns out this individual concern has made the kids healthier and more confident too.

So I hope Holland will renew the spirit of a world that seems to have forgotten its responsibilities to children. We know the course you have chosen is difficult; your sacrifices will not just be cold houses, but an uncertain future that may leave your economy in shambles while others around you emerge seemingly unscathed. When the price seems too high in the future, we hope it will help you to know that your courage and concern is an irreplacable contribution to our spirit and faith.

We would be honored to help. Our school would welcome some of your students (as long as our own heating holds out) and would be happy to enlist the help of other Americans as well. At least the warmth of our hearts and hopes are with you.